

cinema Canada

#62

\$1.25



Documentary Adventures Underwater And Abroad
Meatballs, The Lucky Star, Tulips, L'Hiver Bleu

Lawrence Turman and David Foster PRESENT
A Joel B/Michaels/Garth H Drabinsky PRODUCTION
of A Bob Clark FILM

Jack Lemmon Robby Benson in Tribute

BASED ON THE STAGE PLAY by Bernard Slade
PRODUCED on THE STAGE by Morton Gottlieb
SCREENPLAY by Bernard Slade

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
THE Turman-Foster Company and Richard S. Bright

DIRECTED by Bob Clark

PRODUCED by Joel B/Michaels/Garth H Drabinsky

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Editor/Publisher :

Jean-Pierre & Connie Tadros

Assistant to the Editor :

Teri Coburn (Montreal)

General Manager :

Del Mehes (Toronto)

Subscriptions :

France Lévis (Montreal)

Art Direction :

Claire Baron for Graffitexte

Advertising sales representative :

Gail Walker of Media Budgets (416)
925-9608

Typesetting :

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Toronto office:

67 Portland St.

Toronto, Ont. M5V 2M9

(416) 366-0355

Montreal office:

Box 398, Outremont Station,

Montreal H2V 4N3

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Cover: (photo: Flip Nicklin) In the Red Sea, cinematographers John Stoneman and Chuck Nicklin explore the mysterious beauty of marine life while making **Nomads Of The Deep**. Using the giant 65mm Imax format, the film is a unique visual experience. A section on documentary films, shot underwater and abroad, begins on p. 8.

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Coming soon!

Watch for
Cinema Canada

No. 63

Features on the special effects used in *Scanners*;
the Grierson Seminar;
"In Progress" reports on *Train To Terror*
and *Babe...* and lots more!

REVERB

Legg Has Good Laugh

Many thanks for the issue of **Cinema Canada** with the article on the F.B.I. files (issue No. 56).

Reaction and comments? I was, originally against the publication of the files during the lifetime of those of Grierson's colleagues who might be mentioned in them. The American Inquisition, like the Spanish, was not concerned with pursuing truth, but with rooting out what might be perceived as threats to orthodoxy. History may not repeat itself; but it may go in spirals. And it would be naive to think that something akin to McCarthyism could not arise again — and perhaps with sudden rapidity. I considered that in such an event it was far from impossible that the content of the files — however scurrilous they might be — might be used afresh against those whose names figured in them.

The 'revelations' however — which I happen to have seen already — prove in fact to be so uproariously funny that I don't think they could do much harm in

any circumstances in which a measure of sanity still prevailed. I was, for instance, delighted to discover that I was denounced as being both a fascist and a communist by the same informant; and that both these somewhat opposite accusations were taken seriously by the authorities. I was, likewise, entranced to read that the Director of the F.B.I. (the great Edgar J. Hoover himself) warned the U.S. Attorney General that if Grierson were granted entry "complete protection of the security of the United States from the threat imposed by his presence in this country is impractical." Can you not imagine a stocky figure, grey-blue eyes ablaze, moustache bristling, black hat bashed on back of head, surveying the ruins of America and, dusting off his hands, announcing "Alone I did it"?

And the upshot? Hoover died a discredited man. Grierson did not.

One can only hope that the K.G.B. today is as silly as the F.B.I. was then. Uncomfortably, one doubts it.

Stuart Legg

Seer Grierson

I think you have done an excellent job on the Grierson story. The idiocy of the FBI et al is well presented, and indeed since October last the idiocy and malice have been further and further revealed.

I only have one specific comment, and that is about Unesco. Grierson was definitely **not** sacked from Unesco. He wrote a personal letter of resignation to Julian Huxley (then Director General) in which he forecast (correctly) that the organization was going to strangle itself in its own bureaucracy and that he wanted no part or parcel of it under such terms.

I worked with Grierson and Huxley at Unesco during the period in question, and to my mind there was no doubt that Grierson's diagnosis was correct.

I read the letter of resignation, and I have no doubt now that it can be found in the Grierson Archive at the University of Stirling, Scotland.

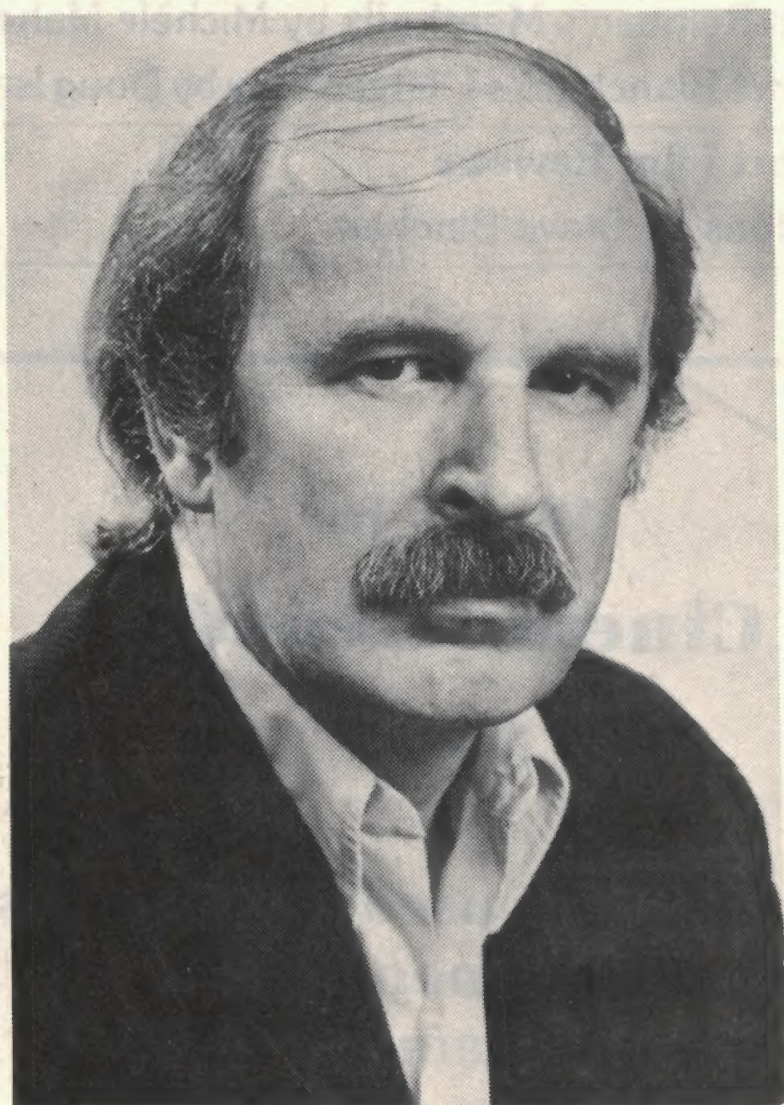
Basil Wright

The Rubbo Rub

I should like to take issue with Ken Dancyger over some comments in his review of Michael Rubbo's **Solzhenitsyn's Children**. And those are his comments on Michael Rubbo and his Canadian audience. Since I was programmer of both this and last year's Grierson Seminar, I would first like to deal with the response to that film at last year's seminar.

Ken Dancyger complains about the lack of response from CBC and routine distribution by NFB offices. "Apparently the CBC is not alone. The film was raked over the coals at this year's Grierson Seminar." Firstly, it was last year's seminar. Secondly, it is incorrect to compare the Grierson to the CBC. The CBC won't show the film. The Grierson did! In fact, the film was shown double system prior to negative cutting, because I believed it was important to show a latest work by Rubbo, a filmmaker for whom I have a great deal of respect.

A couple of years previously the Seminar showed **Waiting for Fidel** and **I am a Tall Tree**. At that time, the CBC had



Richard Farrell
appeared in
The Great Detective
on CBC.

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declined to telecast **Waiting for Fidel**. It was suggested that Joey Smallwood had not struck them as being interesting Canadian content. Anyway, the Ontario Film Association on behalf of the Grierson Seminar sent a letter of protest to the CBC. I believe that the film was subsequently broadcast. Whether or not the OFA letter had anything to do with that, such action plus the first screening outside the NFB of **Solzhenitsyn's Children** does indicate that the OFA and the organizers of the Grierson Seminar recognize Michael Rubbo.

As for the negative response by the participants last year, I'm sorry, but one can't expect people to "embrace his work" if they don't like it, and just because it has been chosen for the seminar. The fact that it was Canadian and international in its theme had nothing to do with it. For instance, Kalle Lasn's **Ritual** — Canadian and about Japan — had a positive response. The participants, to be blunt about it, thought **Solzhenitsyn's Children** to be a very bad film; this is not the place to discuss why, since the remarks were addressed directly to Michael and within the confines of the seminar. For myself, I thought that Michael had gone wildly off track, but that doesn't affect my general opinion of him; after all, a good filmmaker should be permitted an average, even a bad film once in a while.

Now, as to the question of Rubbo's greater acceptance in the U.S. than in Canada. Because PBS has bought the film and Film Forum has shown it, it means that "They love Mike Rubbo in the U.S. and embrace his work." That's a rather embracing conclusion. To suggest that PBS necessarily bought it because it was by Rubbo is to show naiveté about television's reasons for buying shows. Who's "They" anyway? I don't know who "they" is from this review anymore than Ken admits knowing who "we" is in his remarks on resistance to Rubbo's films in Canada.

The issue of distribution of Rubbo's films is larger than Ken suggests in this review. It is part of the context of the NFB's current serious distribution problems and general malaise, and it would be more appropriate for the NFB to comment; although I would note in passing that Rubbo's films are being shown as part of a Cuban Film Festival in Toronto (with which the NFB is involved). The issue is also part of the general context of CBC's attitude towards the NFB and the independent producer; and ultimately it is part of the whole question of distribution and acceptance of Canadian documentary film.

Donald McWilliams

Ghost Writer?

I draw your attention to your film review on page 32 of **Cinema Canada** No. 59, Oct.-Nov. dealing with CBC's **Crossbar**...

Who the hell is Carol Fisher and what's she doing beside me as scriptwriter? I've never heard of the woman.

Other than that, thank you for an intelligent if somewhat inconsistent review.

Keith Leckie

Left Out!

The following two letters were received concerning our "Music For Film" issue of **Cinema Canada**, No. 60/61.

In your December publication of **Cinema Canada**, an article by Glen Morley was concluded with the so-called inclusive list of Canadian film composers. Having noticed my name did not appear on this list and since my entire income is based upon scoring music for films, I am writing to you so that a correction can be made in your next publication.

Some of my recent film scores are "Contact" for the *Nature of Things* (CBC) aired Nov. 21 nationally; "The Bankers," a half-hour film for the Canadian Bankers Association of Canada; "Three Families," a one-hour pilot for the half-hour series *Everybody's Children* on TV Ontario (to be aired in Feb./80).

I am optimistic that the omission of this composer from the list was not intentional and is due to the fact that Mr. Morley simply did not know that I exist. The intent of this letter is to remedy the situation with an addition to the list.

In the near future, I am planning on submitting articles to your publication which will likely be contrary to some of the more conventional views held by film composers!

Lawrence Steinberg
King Rockit Film Music

I enjoyed the series and assume that it will be a particularly informative guide for Canadian film producers, and one of long-awaited necessity. However, I was somewhat surprised, as were several other film composer associates, at the deficiency of the list compiled by Glen Morley, of the Professional Directory of Canadian Film Composers. Before such a list was compiled, it would have been my hope that extensive research be completed so as not to omit the many talented and com-

petent film composer/arranger who may not have scored 250 feature-length films, but who do work professionally and are vital to the Canadian film industry. If one is trying to promote the use of Canadian talent in our films, it seems to me crucial that the list be complete, or not published at all.

It is my hope that it becomes known in the next issue of **Cinema Canada** that this, in fact, is the case, and when a new, more accurate and updated list is compiled, please include my name.

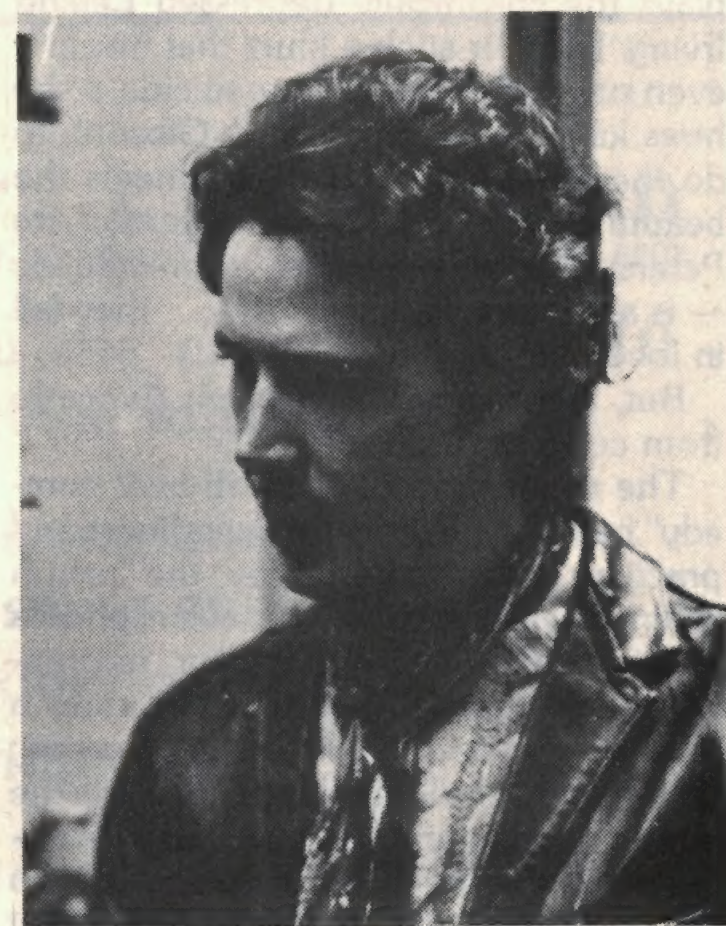
Thank you for your attention.

Betty Lazebnik

The list in question was prepared by the newly formed Guild of Canadian Film Composers — a preliminary list of those who had expressed interest in the organization. The Guild is anxious to offer its services to all film composers across Canada, and can be reached at 133 Hazelton Ave., Toronto, M5R 2E4, or by phoning Ben McPeck at (416) 923-3316.

Errata

Printers sometimes take matters into their own hands, and ours did in the last issue. After cropping a picture of Malcolm Muggeridge and John Mills-Cockell, he printed Muggeridge's picture instead of the composer's. Our apologies to Mills-Cockell, who appears below. Concerning the rock group, F.M., we have no one to blame but ourselves. They are currently composing the score for **The Last Chase** and not, as we reported in a cut-line, working for **Circle of Two**. Again, our apologies both to the group and to the productions. Ed.



John Mills-Cockell recently received the CFTA award for his music in **The Newcomers**

IN PROGRESS...

Tulips

d. Rex Bromfield asst. d. Julian Marks sc. Henry Olek ph. François Protat stunt co-ord. Bob Minor ed. Don Ginsberg sd. Joseph Champagne a.d. Ted Watkins cost. Lynn McKay l.p. Gabe Kaplan, Bernadette Peters, Henry Gibson, Al Waxman exec. p. Harold Greenberg, John B. Bennet p. Don Carmody assoc. p. Lawrence Nesis unit man. Josette Perrotta p. man. Phil McPhedran p.c. Astral Films Productions Ltd./Bennettfilms Inc. pub. David Novek/Holly Levine, Berger & Assoc. Assoc.

It's Grey Cup weekend and the prison cells in Montreal's Palais de Justice aren't yet emptied. They're nearly always cleared by two o'clock, but the Grey Cup festivities place an extra strain on this, one of the city's favorite overnight holding tanks, so the shooting in the prison starts an hour late. Despite this minor setback, the crew plows through and finishes all the day's takes a mere five hours late.

Considering the many features being filmed in Montreal these days, **Tulips** is unique, because it uses Montreal, itself, as the actual location for the plot. Gabe Kaplan, of **Welcome Back Kotter** fame, plays the chronically depressed Leland Irving. Irving is such a klutz that he can't even succeed in committing suicide, so he hires killer, Avocado (Henry Gibson), to do the job 'right'. Irving then meets the beautiful Rutanya Wallace (Bernadette Peters) while she — what a coincidence — is attempting suicide. And . . . they fall in love.

But, is it too late to prevent Avocado from completing the job . . . ?

The production of this "off-beat comedy" has been loaded with one-liners and practical jokes, and today the prison setting arouses a sense of claustrophobia and unreality just perfect for tension-releasing humour. Gabe Kaplan ruins a take and cracks up the crew by announcing that the hired killer (Henry Gibson) is the best in his business, because "he's throwing a party tonight." The crew is also in top form for pranks. And everyone on set recognizes the absurdity of the 'straight' extra, uncomfortably portraying a trans-

vestite prisoner hitching herself up after peeing.

Admittedly, this slapstick humour is really no indication of the quality of the comedy in **Tulips**. Director Rex Bromfield says he didn't even find the script funny until he recognized the potential for developing the characters' farcical relationships. By exploiting the audience's expectations of the well-known actors' characters, and by varying the usual elements in a comic scene, Bromfield will probably succeed in achieving an unusual, "serious, dark-grey comedy." He has worked extensively in television, but has one other feature — **Love at First Sight**, which he wrote and directed. Recently, he completed an "apprenticeship," partially paid for by the CFDC, to Jules Dassin on **Circle of Two**.

Creating the comedy's unusual lighting effects is the meticulous DOP, François

Protat, who spent two years as assistant to Michel Brault, and has since worked as DOP on a number of highly-acclaimed features. In this film he uses low-key lighting and dark pictures to create what is almost a black-and-white look in some shots. "Then boomph!" says Bromfield, "in comes a character with colour — with a pink face," adding another element of surprise to the film.

The production team, which really does work and play together, is so devoted to its work that everyone shows up (unpaid) for the rushes each night after the day's shooting. Most of the crew recently worked together on another film, **Crunches**, in August — which partially explains their team spirit.

The production of **Tulips** has not been all roses, however. Mark Warren, the original director, was reportedly fired at the last minute, postponing the start of



If looks could kill! Bernadette Peters with Gabe Kaplan in **Tulips**

production for two days. Following the decision to go ahead anyway, producer Don Carmody pinch-hit as director, along with stunt coordinator Bob Minor, for a number of exciting, highway-jumping, stunt shots. To top it all off, Carmody broke his leg on the first day.

Bromfield's subsequent appointment as director was no less spontaneous. He was flown in from Toronto simply to have a look at the script. Seeing its potential he said he was interested. Only then did he find out that shooting had begun two days earlier... and could he start seven weeks of shooting the next morning?

Now, the crew is terribly dependent on the whims of Montreal's weather. Carmody says they're desperate for just half a day of clear skies before the snow (?) arrives. He admits it was rather late in the year to be scheduling for clear weather without snow, but exterior driving shots of Bernadette Peters were put off for eleven days when the shooting started because of her previous commitments. At the same time stunt coordinator Bob Minor, had to get the stunts over with and return to L.A. Consequently, the stunts were shot in clear, snow-free, early November. Since then, Montreal has been rainy and gloomy most of the time, and because of this, Carmody says the production is a day behind schedule, but still within budget. He is confident though, that they can improvise the driving scene if they don't get the right weather.

In spite of possible production problems, **Tulips**, a 3.8 million dollar Astral Bellevue Pathé/Bennettfilms co-production, has already been marketed and sold, worldwide, by Avco Embassy Films. According to Carmody, **Tulips** has been one of Avco's biggest sales ever, largely because of the strength of the script, and the well-known cast of Gabe Kaplan, Bernadette Peters, Henry Gibson and Al Waxman.

The prison ward is stuffy after the team has spent five hours inside, and the cameraman is annoyed because he's receiving conflicting messages from the director and first assistant director. But it's hard to stay edgy when Avocado is about to land in jail — in style! Soon he'll come through the electric gates carrying an outrageous umbrella with a rubber-duck head for a handle, accompanied by his cart of personal 'necessities' including a television, ice bucket and mineral water. Besides, yesterday, the wonderfully funny and warm Henry Gibson sent out real avocados and hand-written invitations to drinks tonight at Stash's in Old Montreal. . . as soon as this take is over and the director calls "wrap!"

Mark Leslie

The Lucky Star

d. Max Fischer asst. d. Pierre Magny sc. Max Fischer, adapt./dial. Jack Rosenthal ph. Frank Tidy ed. Yves Langlois sd. Patrick Rousseau a.d. Michel Proulx cost. Jany Van Huber l.p. Rod Steiger, Louise Fletcher, Lou Jacobi, Brett Marx exec. p. André Fleury p. Claude Léger assoc. p. Pieter Kroonenburg p. manager. Matthew Vibert loc. man. Didier Hoffman unit pub. Denise Di Novi p.c. Caneuram Films Inc. pub. David Novek, Lucienne Appel for Berger & Assoc.

My appointment with the publicist is for two p.m. Finding the location turns out to be no trouble at all; after all, how many of Montreal's narrow, one-way streets have three trailer homes, a converted

school bus and four large Budget trucks parked on them.

Outside, all is quiet. I check the address, open the door, and follow the cables up a flight of stairs and in through another door — but still nobody. I look around and find all the familiar trappings: tape recorders, film cans, Coke and Seven-Up tins, wires leading everywhere. Then, to the left and down the hall there are voices. As I enter the room they stop talking, look up and smile. They, too, appear to be waiting for the publicist.

Inside the double livingroom/dining-room sits a man with a grey beard that curls up neatly at the tip. He is sketching,

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"A movie on your very own street is a dream come true." On location with **The Lucky Star** crew

intently, all alone. Further along, the set. The table is set for three. Jars of jam, a salami, and some very white bread.

I sit down beside the man, on a settee as

old as the house and long since emptied of whatever stuffing it may have once contained. He stops sketching, looks up and smiles. I introduce myself and we start talking. He is the director of photography, Frank Tidy, soft-spoken, with an English English accent.

As we discuss the shooting, he seems pleased with everything but the weather. Evidently, he is enjoying turning Montreal into Amsterdam. He speaks appreciatively of the work done by the design department in recreating a Dutch market in the St. Lawrence Street area, as well as having found appropriately flat countryside west of Montreal near the Soulanges Canal. They have already been out there shooting exteriors with Louise Fletcher. She will be returning to town, along with her co-star, Rod Steiger, when the cast and crew head for Montreal's Sonolab studios, where the majority of the film will be shot. Although Tidy thinks Montreal is conducive to a Dutch adaptation, alas, it lacks the canals; so a skeleton crew will go off to the 'real' Amsterdam for a fast week of exterior shooting.

The conversation shifts to the director, Max Fischer, who is described as the bald man in the kitchen. Almost on cue, the bald man walks into the room and sits on the other side of us. It's lunch time and they are waiting for the cast and crew to return. I ask them both about working on a feature in Canada for the first time. Tidy alludes to his own language limitations with the predominantly Francophone crew, commenting that, luckily, he usually has the trilingual director at his side. Fischer smiles. Suddenly, there are noises on the stairs, and more people than

seems possible begin to fill up the living-room. Fischer is on his feet to greet them all. Smiles for everyone, kisses on both cheeks for some.

The publicist has arrived, as has one of the three actors involved in today's scene. I don't hear anyone yell "action," but obviously nobody needs to hear it. They just do it. Belts are strapped on, lights checked, make-up is brushed on, as the booming voice of the first assistant director rises above the din. Well-ordered confusion abounds — as do tooth picks hanging from mouths that look well-lunched.

All of this preparation is for an early day of shooting on **The Lucky Star**, a film that stars fourteen year-old Brett Marx (even without his last name the kid is a ringer for Harpo. When I mention this to the director, he agrees, but qualifies it with "Harpo crossed with Paul Newman"...), Louise Fletcher, Rod Steiger, and Lou Jacobi, who by now has entered the hallway. In a skip and a jump, already in costume and not looking at all out of place in this 'old neighborhood,' Jacobi approaches and tells a joke. It is the first of a steady stream... proving that Show-Biz does indeed provide a continuum: Vaudeville isn't dead, it's what goes on between takes.

Jacobi's presence here is interesting for more than his jokes. He is not only a survivor, but one of those U.S.-based Canadians, come back to take part in the Canadian film boom. The irony of the situation is not lost on Jacobi. Once he had to leave his native Toronto in order to 'make it'. Now, he has just completed a feature there. Besides Jacobi, there are a number of other Canadian actors in **The Lucky Star**, including Guy L'Écuyer and the multi-talented Jean Gascon.

The film, budgeted at three million dollars, is being produced by Claude Léger of Caneuram Films, and Peter Kroonenberg. A few days into shooting, however, an addition is made, and it's a first: Télé-Métropole, the privately-owned French television network, becomes involved and the hierarchy shifts. André Fleury of Sonolab (now wholly owned by Télé-Métropole) becomes executive producer, Claude Léger remains producer and Peter Kroonenberg is associate producer.

But none of these changes directly effects what is at hand, and the 'key' to the whole film arrives in a parka, playfully yelling for his hairdresser. Thus far, the young Mr. Marx has pleased both the director and the crew — a good sign, because the kid is in virtually every scene!

In this film, which is described as part fantasy, part Western and part war movie, Marx plays David Goldberg. His parents

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are captured by the Nazis in Amsterdam, causing David to run for the hills — or at least, to a country village where he finds shelter with a sympathetic widow. The mayor of the village discovers David is a Jew and pins a yellow star to his chest. Instead of accepting it as the star of death it is meant to be, David thinks of it as a sheriff's badge empowering him to run the 'bad guys' out of town. During the process, young David manages to capture his own Goliath, in the form of a Nazi colonel. And a showdown ensues. Along the ride to the showdown, however, the fear and weakness of a villager enters into the situation, rounding off this fantasy-cowboy-war story into what the synopsis calls a "heart warming drama."

To say the least, it is a tall order. But what appears on paper does not take into account the one aspect of this film that seems to set it apart from other shoots: Max Fischer not only conceived the idea for **The Lucky Star**, he wrote the script (with adaption and dialogue by Jack Rosenthal of **Bar Mitzvah Boy** fame). He has also managed to see his film through the pre-production stages and to get it before the cameras — a feat which few directors have accomplished in recent years. Fischer's personality and sense of commitment have had positive effects on cast and crew alike.

Montreal actress Helen Hughes, in the role of the boy's mother, is now ready and the camera is set up. As I stand waiting for "action!" to be yelled, somebody taps me on the shoulder. It is the very amiable Mr. Tidy (director of photography on Ridley Scott's impressive **The Duelists**) still smiling, and offering me a look through the



Right on target! Director Max Fischer with star Brett Marx on **The Lucky Star** set

lens. And there it is, the magic of the movies, as the room before me is transformed into a visual of another time, another place.

The run-through comes off smoothly and Fischer is gracious and grateful. Clearly, he is enjoying himself. The same breakfast table scene is shot from three different angles, and in each take Jacobi adds a nuance or a slight line change that keeps everyone fresh and the director smiling.

On the street outside, the production assistants busy themselves as much to keep warm as anything else. The neighborhood is full of school buses carrying children, and it's not easy keeping the street quiet for the second story filming. Everybody wants a look, a peek: a movie on your very own street is a dream come true. Time will tell if Fischer's dream comes off as well.

Kevin Tierney



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mako films

gentle giants and company

by edward lynas



John Stoneman's latest film features the biggest stars of all time — and they had a whale of a time making it! The following film review and production profile suggest that Canada is fast-becoming a leader in the field of underwater cinematography.

Somewhere near Tadoussac, while cruising up the St. Lawrence River last July, Edward Lynas (founder of the Ocean Research Information Society) completed his draft of the following film review, **Nomads Of The Deep**.

Former editor of *Dive Canada*, Lynas senses "a growing audience for the underwater film, and a like response among filmmakers... In California several producers are having special Panavision units built to record the 'wet look,' and Underwater Film Festivals are spouting like pumpkins across the continent."

Canada's contribution to the development of underwater cinematography is significant. In a special production profile, Dennis Rindsem explains how **Nomads Of The Deep** was shot, using the unique Imax camera system.

How does the Imax system differ from conventional 35mm? The film frame is ten times larger, as is the projection screen. Consequently, viewing audiences feel as if they are right on location and in the action.

Imax is the brainchild of design engineer Bill Shaw, and the Canadian-owned company, Imax Systems Corp. founded in 1967 by Roman Kroitor, Robert Kerr and Graeme Ferguson (president). The first Imax film was shown at Expo 1970 in Osaka, Japan.

Canada has two of the eleven Imax systems in the world: one at Ontario Place, Toronto; the other at Pyramid Place, Niagara Falls. As **Nomads Of The Deep** has proven, thanks to this Canadian invention, underwater cinematography will never be the same again.

Here in the St. Lawrence River, the whales are late this year. Still, now and then, one of the vanguard surfaces around my boat, making the long, waiting hours seem slight. Each time a whale appears, I am once again awed by its fluid power and beauty, and more acutely conscious of the almost impossible challenge of translating the experience on film.

Elsewhere, to the distant southwest, the whales are on time — they have been and gone. But fortunately, something of their Pacific passage was recorded by director/cinematographer John Stoneman, for his most recent film **Nomads Of The Deep**: a film that succeeds perhaps better than any other to date, in portraying the singular experience of being among living, breathing whales in open water. One particular sequence, in which a female Humpback whale and her calf display their affection for each other, is so charged with beauty, tenderness and sensitivity, it supersedes anything I have experienced in thousands of hours spent among whales. In this, and other se-



photo: Sarah Stoneman

John Stoneman, director/cinematographer for **Nomads Of The Deep**

quences the camera is integral to the action, the medium comes into its own, outdoing even reality.

Nomads Of The Deep is an impressive film on several counts, representing another step in the evolution of underwater filmmaking in North America. So powerful is its appeal that even lay audiences respond with the enthusiasm of devotees to the subject. Not only is the film indicative of Stoneman's growth as a filmmaker, it also represents a courageous move into an esoteric area on the part of Canadian producer, Mako Films Ltd.

Main locations for the film, ninety-five percent of which is shot beneath the surface, are the brilliant waters of the Red Sea, and the Hawaiian Islands — exotic enough locations, to be sure. Yet the film doesn't have to rely upon the stereotypical images these names evoke. Since the underwater visibility is from forty to

seventy metres, the audience sees all of the action: there is no need to fill in from imagination what might have been lacking in experience.

Stoneman is obviously determined to exploit the large-screen format (sixty by eighty feet), in order to achieve a maximum range of movement, while capitalizing on light, drama, and angle possibilities.

Nowhere is his purpose more evident, or better understood, than in the initial opening sequence. The viewer is immediately absorbed through the membrane of the lens, into the dimensions and immensity of liquid space: a space alive with being and form — the pulsating rhythm of existence further dramatized by interposing light, shade, and shadow with depth and colour.

The film is divisible into three segments, each with its own setting, rhythm, mood, and statement, and each a natural



photo: Flip Nicklin

Follow that Humpback! Easier said than done for underwater cinematographer Chuck Nicklin with the 312 lb. Imax camera

element of the whole. In the first, Stoneman guides the viewer through the habitat of a reef — a fluid, embracing, somewhat erotic, certainly poetic world, populated by a multitude of life forms. They are sustained in this fragile ecosystem only through an intricate web of interdependence. Appropriately the canvas is broad, colourful and busy. Darkness and light are delicately balanced. The mood is quietly dramatic. Particular attention is given to the shot-sequences and camera angles, where a definite attempt is made to create a new, non-terrestrial experience that severs all land-connected consciousness.

Now the film enters the predatory world of the shark: an area of familiar ground for the audience — an area where, because of the nature of the animals, there are severe limits on what can be achieved with the film. Consequently, it is the least effective segment. Nevertheless, the crafting goes on; both background and mood are stark; drama is heightened; the colour is cold; the camera, moving erratically and aggressively, sweeps the vast expanse of blue. Here, above all, Stoneman is concerned with placing the shark (and other predators) in their proper context. His statement is most blatant, both verbally and visually, as camera and cameraman leave the safety of their cages to reach out to the sharks: an action which places the film crew at some risk, but emphasizes the point that what we least understand, we fear most.

Finally, the film enters its last and major segment, the world of the mind beneath the waters, the realm of the great whales. On a purely functional level, here is some of the most incredible wildlife footage

ever shot underwater: a mother and calf embracing in a uniquely intercut sequence; two whales engaged in mating behaviour; the elegant counter-suspended ballet of a singing whale; the inter-species rapport between film crew and subjects. It is a gentle, gigantic and intelligent canvas characterizing Stoneman's empathy with the mammals. The camera probes to record, understand, and interpret without being obtrusive. Instinctively, he understands when the mood, movement and pace belong to the whales, so he adds nothing — takes nothing away: an unmistakable sign of thorough crafting.

Nomads Of The Deep is a film frequently in contrast to the underwater film genre: a genre which can be grouped into three categories. First, is the 'documentation' or 'scientific' production a record or off-shoot (albeit a natural one) of some other exploratory or scientific purpose, where the film element is superseded by the primary objective. Second, is that of the 'commercial' production, intended for (and frequently sponsored by) the sport diving community, or the would-be sport diver. Generally, films of this type are well-photographed, tightly-edited works extolling the beauty and adventure of the world open to the underwater diver. Finally, there is the category of film which is a collection of footage held together by the fact that it is photographed underwater — in which a scene or segment of an otherwise 'normal' film is shot underwater.

In **Nomads Of The Deep**, Stoneman has set out to make a complete underwater film for its own sake — a characterization of his previous films, too — because he is a filmmaker who goes underwater for his subject matter, not a

diver or a scientist who has slipped into film. In previous films, he has added the elements of plot and drama. With this latest, he extends his scope by de-emphasizing the plot (which is thin and open-ended), and stressing, instead, what is best described as 'movement as an art form.' Perhaps because of improved equipment and working conditions, and the freedom that comes with growth and experience in the water medium, this latest film is his most successful. It has broad public appeal, and suffers only where it makes concessions to this design, end; namely in length and narration. But Stoneman's sensitivity fully compensates for this; he has managed to add another dimension to our understanding of that dimension to our understanding of marine life.

Here in the St. Lawrence at the conclusion of this review, the drafting of which has kept me for a time from my beloved whales, I am left with a feeling of optimism; for **Nomads Of The Deep** speaks to me of a filmmaker who cares — about his craft, his art, his audience, and especially about the total environment we share. Perhaps, as a result of that caring, and the eloquent expression of it in Stoneman's film, we will all begin to care enough... And there will be life in this river to wonder at for many summers to come.

d. John Stoneman co.writer Ted Woods underwater ph. Chuck Nicklin, John Stoneman surface ph. David Douglas ed. Toni Trow asst. ed. Yan Moore sd. re-rec. Paul Coombe stills and lights Flip Nicklin scientific consultant Dr. Roger Payne m. Mickey Erbe, Maribeth Solomon p. David Keighley asst. to the p. Peter Hayman p. sec. Sharon Buck p.c. Mako Films Ltd. col. 65mm Imax running time 20 min.

imax takes the plunge

by dennis rindsem

National Geographic launched the New Year by featuring in its January 1979 volume a series of articles on the Humpback whale. At the same time, a Canadian film company, Mako Films, began to shoot a twenty-minute film for Ontario Place. The connection between these two projects was that Mako's film also included a major sequence on the Humpback. A principal difference between the schemes was the format used by each; *National Geographic* shot superb 35mm stills, while Mako filmed its episodes using the 65mm Imax format.

John Stoneman, director and co-underwater cinematographer, chose to shoot the film using the Imax format because, "the Imax format is a visual experience," and the purpose of the film was "to involve the audience in the beauty and excitement of the ocean environment. The Imax system allows the audience to do this without actually getting wet!"

Nomads of the Deep took three months to complete and was shot at three different locations. Because the Red Sea contains an abundant variety of marine life, it was chosen as the first location — to introduce the audience to the underwater realm. The middle section of the film, shot off the coast of California, consists of a shark scene filmed "to show the shark in a more favorable and realistic light than that portrayed in *Jaws*." The final, but perhaps most significant portion of the film was lensed in the breeding grounds of the Humpback whale off the coast of Maui.

The film equipment included two Imax camera bodies, one underwater housing, an assortment of prime lenses (30mm to 650mm), twelve lights, and approximately three-hundred feet of cable. Altogether there were forty-five cases of lights and camera equipment, plus the crew's diving and personal gear.

The crew consisted of two Americans and five Canadians. The Americans, Chuck and Flip Nicklin, were chosen not only because of their extensive under-

*Dennis Rindsem is a free-lance cinematographer with a special interest in underwater filming. He has recently completed shooting **Mondo Two**, soon to be released.*



The undersea world of Imax

water filming experience, but specifically because of their previous experience with filming the Humpbacks of Maui in 16mm. Chuck Nicklin, the co-underwater cameraman, had shared similar duties before with underwater cameramen such as Al Gidding (*The Deep*). It was particularly useful to have two underwater cameramen on the **Nomads** shoot because quite

often it was necessary to film at depths of one-hundred, or one-hundred and fifty feet — making it necessary to follow the procedures for decompression. Thus, one cameraman could continue shooting while the other spent the required period of time on the surface waiting for the nitrogen to dissolve out of his blood. Flip Nicklin acted as underwater gaffer and

photo: Flip Nicklin



photo: Flip Nicklin

A little too close for comfort? this Humpback whale surfaces beside Dr. Roger Payne's researchers

stills photographer on location. Divers appearing in the film were shown carrying battery-operated lights whenever possible. This made the addition of other lights — needed to enhance certain shots — seem less artificial. But in shots which did not include the divers, it was necessary to fill-in with a '2K' cabled from the surface. It was Flip's job to run as much as three-hundred feet of cable to this light. Despite the lights, it was still necessary to 'push' all of the underwater footage one 'stop.'

David Keighley and his assistant, Peter Hayman, were responsible for moving the crew and equipment to and from the locations, and dealing with any problems which might arise on location. At one point, while they were shooting in Israel, Keighley had to race five rolls of film to the lab in Los Angeles to inspect the footage. (He may have established some sort of record, as the task was accomplished in under seventy-two hours!)

Every two or three weeks, when the crew was lucky, they had a chance to view their rushes.

David Douglas maintained the Imax camera, and when he wasn't busy with that job he shot the surface footage. He was able to have the Imax camera reloaded and ready to shoot in roughly ten minutes. Just getting the Imax "beast" out of the water proved a chore because it weighed over three-hundred pounds with the housing. In the water, however, it handled beautifully. The Imax people had tested the underwater housing to a depth of four-hundred feet, but recommended that it not be taken below one-hundred and fifty. On several occasions though, it was necessary to follow creatures to depths slightly more than this. Fortunately, there were no problems with the housing — as there is only one other underwater housing in existence!

Shots had to be planned carefully, as the thousand-foot loads only lasted for

roughly three minutes. Consequently, with the exception of the shark scene, all the shots which included divers were storyboarded and rehearsed before shooting. Another interesting problem the cinematographers had to face was composing for the giant screen. Generally, they placed the main action in the bottom third of the frame, because this is where the viewer's eye tends to rest when viewing the vast screen; but, in portions of the film, such as the cave and shark scenes, the action was orchestrated to move the audience's eyes from one part of the screen to another.

Underwater communication is usually limited. The crew tried wet phones for a time, but the standard hand signals were found to be just as effective and easier to use. Very little location sound was recorded, as previous arrangements had been made to use Dr. Roger Payne's stereo recordings. (The famous marine biologist's recordings of the Humpback

have even been carried to outer space by Cape Kennedy spacecrafts.)

David Bondy, having accompanied John Stoneman on many dives, acted as support diver on the shoot. It was Bondy's job to remain alert to any potential danger, so that the rest of the crew could concentrate on filming. In particular, the shark series must have provided him, as well as the rest of the crew, with a few anxious moments. Although they were on hand, power sticks were rarely loaded during this sequence, and the shark cage was used only as a stage prop. The sequence came off without an incident. John did, however, admit to one anxious moment which occurred while the crew was following a Humpback and her calf. The team was about half-a-mile from their ship, when John suddenly heard Bondy's voice over the wet phone: "Below you! Below you!" Looking down, John saw a rather large Dusky Shark only



photo : John Stoneman

Chuck Nicklin, co-underwater cinematographer for *Nomads Of The Deep*

tén feet away. Fortunately, the shark was merely curious about the strange parade following the pair of whales, and soon swam off.

There were many other exciting, if less dangerous moments, and the cameramen were able to record some behavior which has never before been observed. They filmed a mother Humpback teaching her calf buoyancy control, and on another occasion, filmed a forty-ton Humpback singing away as it lay on its back in one-hundred feet of water.

The giant format, with its equally weighty actors, will be a hard act to follow. But Stoneman's talk of possible, future plans, such as filming the Right whale and an assortment of other fascinating marine creatures found off the coast of Argentina, indicate that Mako will soon be involved in the production of another, exciting, underwater film we can all look forward to. □



photo : Flip Nicklin

Posing with the star of the show — the Imax — surface photographer David Douglas gets the right exposure

sunrise films

young hands, old skills

by gerry flahive

Globe-trotting filmmakers, Paul and Deepa Saltzman, are out to record ancient craft traditions before they disappear. Their film series on crafts-children from around the world contains a provocative message.



16 year-old Steffan Keller and his grandfather in Germany : from the film *Steve's Violin*

A few desks, some wicker baskets, and a battered Steenbeck editing table were about all that occupied the new offices of Sunrise Films in mid-December. After making thirteen films for a documentary series, in almost as many countries, the small Toronto company has moved into its first real production office. (Previously, everything was done from the owners' apartment.)

Spread Your Wings is the title of the series, which celebrates the inventiveness and dedication to craft of thirteen young people. Paul Saltzman, who, with his wife Deepa and associate Fred Harris, undertook the project, feels that more should be shown and said "about the creativity of humans and a little less about the destructiveness of humans — a little more positive imagery, a little less shoot'em-up."

In the early seventies, while making a film in India about a Canadian diplomat, Paul saw children working at a tourist store that made inlaid marble tables, chess sets, and boxes. "It just sort of blew my mind, watching those eight and ten year-old kids... really masterful craftsmen" — their work, "the offshoot of the creative tradition that you see in the Taj Mahal."

That scene started him thinking about his own culture, in which a college degree, though frequently 'useless', is seemingly mandatory as proof of education. He later wrote that, "True education is a co-ordination of the hands and the mind in the direction of a better life" — an idea that generated four films on the subject, focusing on children between the ages of ten and sixteen. India was chosen as the setting.

Initial support for the project came from Rena Krawanga, an officer at CBC's program purchasing department, who made a commitment for two of the films and provided some seed money. "Absolutely a gem, she's one of a kind," says Saltzman. "She goes out on a limb all the time, as much as she can, to help young filmmakers get started. She's terrific."

Two films, **Hasan The Carpet Weaver** and **Child Of Gold**, each twenty-five minutes in length and shot in colour, were completed during 1975 and 1976. But lack of money and a tiring workload cut the trip short, and the team returned to Canada without making the second two films planned. Still, they had been impressed by the childrens' talents, and were convinced that the potential number of such films was limited only by the number of different crafts around the world.

Making a series now seemed a natural idea, although that had not been the original intention. The Saltzmans realized that the two finished films could be presented as pilots, and they approached the CBC with a proposal to make eleven more. "That's the way the business runs anyway. You do a series by doing a pilot, to show people what the films look like. As small, independent filmmakers, we had never thought as big as a series until that moment."

Fifteen months passed before a contract for **Spread Your Wings** was signed with the CBC. During this time, Sunrise made about twenty films, most only a few minutes in length. Exceptional individuals, who show formidable spirit and a strong commitment to their work, whatever it

may be, are the usual subjects of the company's films.

What's The Weather Like Up There? is a particularly entertaining example. It is a portrait of Louis Lim, an Asian immigrant to Canada. Despite his extensive banking experience, he has only been able to find work in the cashier's booth of the underground parking lot below (ironically) the Commerce Court building in Toronto. But he is resolutely cheerful, an admirable husband and father, and a knowledgeable music lover.

India has been a rich source for the Saltzmans' work. Deepa was born there, and wrote children's scripts at a cinema workshop in New Delhi. The couple met in the country while Paul was shooting a film there, and they later collaborated on an interview-documentary about Indira Gandhi, made during the 'political emergency' crisis. Deepa has also directed a film for the Indian Ministry of Family Planning. So when arrangements for **Spread Your Wings** were settled with the French and English divisions of the CBC in 1977, the filmmakers had a considerable output behind them.

The process of finding eleven subjects for eleven films proved to be a lengthy and expensive one. The World Craft Council in New York "knew very little about what kids were doing in creativity." \$750 spent on phone calls to officials in France produced nothing. The Romanian government wouldn't say yes and wouldn't say no. And when the Saltzmans and Harris arrived in West Germany, their subject, a boy pianist, was unavailable for a week. He was also a child prodigy — a type they definitely did not want to film. The child prodigy, as a very elite member of



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Gerry Flahive is a free-lance writer in Toronto.



Filmmakers Paul and Deepa Saltzman — with good reason to be on top of the world

society, was hardly a suitable subject for a series intending to inspire anyone, artistic or not.

Flexibility became crucial, and much of the \$50,000 to \$60,000 allotted for each film was spent on logistics — digging out information themselves, and changing locations if necessary. In most situations, it took them eighteen to twenty days, once they were in a country, to find a subject and make the film. In Japan, however, almost three weeks were spent finding and making arrangements with Yoshiko, a young girl learning paper-making. The filming took another two weeks.

In total, four trips, including the first one to India, were made. The second trip, in 1977, took them to Germany, Iran, Greece, and France. The filmmakers travelled twice in 1978, visiting Zanzibar, Florida, and Peru in the spring, and Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and Bali in the fall. They were never able to screen any of their rushes, as exposed footage was immediately shipped back to Canada along the way.

In each case, several days were spent with the child, observing his or her daily routine, before any filming was

begun. For the narration, the subjects were interviewed and their comments made into a script, with whatever explanatory information was needed. Saltzman felt it would be “easier and more correct, more alive to use their own words about their own feelings and their own lives, than for us to try and make up what they felt.”

The **Spread Your Wings** films “were never straight documentaries.” Saltzman uses the term ‘docu-tainment’ to describe them — fast cutting, lots of music, and a story line with a beginning, middle and end. While the ordinary, half-hour documentary contains 100 to 200 shots, the films in their series have as many as 450.

The subject of crafts gave them “a visual representation to build the film around — something got made, something got created that the camera could watch coming into fruition.” Narration was cut to a minimum.

Each film shows a child reaching a level of maturity as a craftsman, the creation of beautiful objects being an integral part of their lives. Great respect is shown for elders and tradition, for religion and nature, for family and friendship. Problems are not glossed over, and, at one



From the film **Hasan the Carpet Weaver**, 12 year-old Hasan Gulam Ohar and his grandfather in Kashmir

point in the Japanese film, the young girl feels like quitting her apprenticeship.

Music indigenous to each country was used, and in **Journey To Zanzibar**, a film about boat-building, the filmmakers tried to edit the ship-launching scene to represent the way in which they had experienced it — a happy, frenetic party attended by the whole town. Japanese people, after seeing **Yoshiko And The Paper Maker**, said that in terms of film language, it looked and felt Japanese.

So far, nine of the series' installments have appeared on the CBC, and sales have been made to countries as varied as Denmark, India, Japan, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and others. Interestingly, **Through Amy's Eyes**, about a young Florida photographer, is the only one of the thirteen not purchased by Swedish television. Although it has been called "a real anthropological document, a view of Middle America," Saltzman thinks the Swedes may be rejecting it because "they may feel there is nothing to be learned from it" and are perhaps "ill at ease at seeing the richness of their own (Western) culture." Ironically, this film may be the very one that sells the series in the States. Americans like to see their own image. "Witness," says Saltzman, "the

disguising of Toronto as Metropolis USA, in features shot here designed for American consumption."

Paul, who has worked at the CBC and at the National Film Board, once thought that independent filmmakers were "a bunch of bloodthirsty, cutthroat, selfish money-grubbers." Now, as a private producer himself, he has sought to improve the financial situation for independents.

In 1975, the Independent Producers Group, an umbrella organization of seven Toronto production companies, sent a letter drafted by Saltzman to the Secretary of State, in which an appeal was made for the inclusion of short films in the 100% tax write-off provision. That, for various reasons, later occurred, and Sunrise now receives some private investment. The organization (see Cinema Canada No. 21) is now known as the Canadian Independent Film Foundation.

Sunrise starts production early in the new year in Guatemala, the site of the first of thirteen more films for **Spread Your Wings**. Two of the films will be made in the Peoples' Republic of China, permission for which took two years to secure. Two will be shot in Canada (in British Columbia and on the coast of Hudson's Bay), and the rest, tentatively, in Sweden, the U.S.S.R., Nigeria, Ethiopia, Burma, Bhutan, Australia, and the Tonga Islands.

In their efforts to seek out young creativity, in their devotion to quality, in their 'praise of hands', the filmmakers of Sunrise Films would be good subjects for their own series: **Spread Your Wings** is truly "a co-ordination of the hands and the mind." □

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movie magic in mozambique

by ron hallis

To Mozambican villagers, films are a rare and wondrous experience. For Ron Hallis, filmmaking in Mozambique is no less fascinating.



Ron Hallis getting the perfect tot shot. Hang in there, kid!

photo: Ophera Hallis

On June 25, 1975, Mozambique became an independent republic after five-hundred years of Portuguese colonial domination. The Marxist-Leninist government of **FRELIMO** (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) established the Instituto Nacional de Cinema to help "unify, mobilize, and educate the people." The Portuguese filmmakers who worked in Mozambique before Independence, grinding out effulgent trash such as *The Visit of the Governor of Rhodesia to Mozambique*, had little interest in developing African cinema, or allowing the young Mozambican workers they employed, and exploited, a chance to learn the whole process of filmmaking. The few Mozambicans chosen to work as assistants to the Portuguese, were sequestered in tedious jobs, refused access to higher knowledge, and even forbidden to enter each other's work-space. In the country as a whole, the Mozambican people were not allowed to express themselves politically or culturally, travel from one region to another, or develop a meaningful perspective on the outside world.

The Ministry of Information has recruited 'Cooperantes' from Great Britain, Brazil, and Canada to teach filmmaking at the National Film Institute in Maputo. Ophera and Ron Hallis spent a year and a half as Cooperantes teaching film and making films in Mozambique during 1978 and '79.



I often sat at the window of our apartment in Maputo before leaving for work in the morning, watching the sun rise over the Indian Ocean and the first rays of orange light striking the tops of Coconut palms along Avenida Friedrich Engels below. A stormy, Canadian winter night three years earlier sometimes came to mind. I had just then purchased a processing machine, printer, and sensitometer from Joseph Gonda, a teacher of photo-chemistry at Sanford Fleming College in Peterborough, and was hauling it home to Montreal in a rented van. As I stared through the windshield at the icy highway, I thought of Robert Flaherty hand-processing the negative and workprint of *Nanook* in the extreme conditions of the Sub-Arctic, using ice water to wash the developed film, and mounting his contact-printer over a hole cut in his cabin wall where the sun acted as an exposure lamp.

My idea had been to set up a small, functional, 16mm laboratory which would enable me to continue making low-budget, black-and-white documentaries with the highest possible image quality. During the next three years I was to develop a strong attachment to the mess of tanks, pumps, pipes, and rollers that brought the plastic material through the most hazardous, final stages of film production. Crouched in my cellar for countless hours, listening to the compressed-air squeegee blowing fa fa fa along the perforated edge of miles and miles of film, I learned the ropes by trial and error, some scientific analysis, prying information from reluctant lab managers, and meeting obscure machinists in taverns after work to discuss, among

Ron Hallis is a teacher on contract with the National Film Institute of Mozambique. He is presently working on three documentaries, shot in Mozambique, on communal village life there.

other things, recirculation, carbon-lung blowers, and self-priming pumps. I began to entertain the idea of taking in outside work to finance my own productions when Robert Lantos of RSL Productions approached me to process the negative of Gilles Carle's film *L'ange et la femme*. Carle, his cinematographer François Protat and I, did several tests of exposure, developers and development, to ensure optimum quality. The film was shot in 16mm and blown up to 35mm for theatrical release.

Glen Hodgins, a young Canadian sound-recordist I had met, had been to Mozambique and was aware of their need for someone to teach motion picture laboratory technique. He took my application with him on his return. It included details of the work I had done on Carle's film. A Mozambican delegation was to see Carle's film out of competition at the Cannes Film Festival and, impressed with the quality, contacted me up on their return to Maputo. Several weeks later I was on a plane, studying Portuguese grammar and vocabulary, trying to imagine what awaited me at 946 Agostinho Neto Avenue.

I was put up at the Hotel Aviz on the corner of Patrice Lumumba and Salvador Allende, a twenty-minute walk from the white stucco building housing the Cinema Nacional and Instituto Nacional de Cinema. At that time, about ten people were working in the production department, and three short films were in production: *Offensiva Culturale*, a sixty-second 'spot' for a Worker's cultural festival; *Cheias*, a ten-minute documentary about the 1977 floods in the Limpopo River Valley; and *Chimoio*, a ten-minute documentary about the Rhodesian attack on a

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Zimbabwean refugee camp near the Mozambican town of Chimoio. Sitting amongst the lab workers, Malo, Malumba, Castigo, Vasco and Magaia, I watched the horrifying images of countless bodies of murdered women and children strewn over the rain-soaked ground and piled in huge open graves.

Most of the year and a half that Ophera and I spent in Mozambique was devoted to work at the Institute. Our collective was comprised of editing, camera, and laboratory workers, plus a group of foreign Cooperantes including Murillo Salles, a Brazilian director of photography (**Dona Flor**); Brazilian director Ruy Guerra (**Os Fuzis**, **The Sweet Hunters**); Canadian soundman Glen Hodgins; editor Ophera Hallis, and myself. Together, we were responsible for the production of a series of eight monthly documentaries called "Kuxa Kanema" (meaning the 'birth of cinema' in Changana, the local language), and two feature films — **Estas Sao As Armas**, a compilatory documentary about the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and Rhodesian aggressions; and **Mueda**, a film on the annual street-theatre dramatization of the 1960 massacre of six-hundred Mozambicans by Portuguese troops in the town of Mueda.

Towards the end of my stay in Mozambique, I began researching a film project that I planned to shoot in my spare time, about a Makuayi dance group I had encountered one afternoon dancing under the awning of a sidewalk cafe in Maputo. The leader of the group, dressed in white cotton pants and jacket decorated with Portuguese military insignia, FRELIMO colors, and an MPLA button, wore white gloves and a Traffic Control Maputo arm-band. He was chanting gutturally into a disconnected telephone receiver as he stamped and shuffled back and forth before an appreciative audience. I asked a man standing next to me what the song meant. "He is telephoning Salazar," he answered, "telling him he will never again touch this earth." I was fascinated by this type of dance and the intense, personal style of the leader, who I subsequently came to know quite well: Antonio Matusse, son of Maningi and Mahombu from Xai-Xai (pronounced Shy-Shy) had left the countryside to work in a South African gold mine, and then returned to serve in the Portuguese colonial army. After we had known each other for a few weeks, he invited me to travel with him to the Communal Village Omm, near Xai Xai, to visit his mother, father, and brother. He wrote to his brother and told him that we were coming with the cinema 'muchini' (derived from the English word, machine). During the long bus ride Matusse told me a compelling story about the first time he had seen a film. When he was about sixteen, a Swiss couple had come to his area offering to show an educational film to the people. Matusse's father suggested that they show the film that night in front of his house, and went about notifying the people in the area. During the projection, two jeeps full of armed, Portuguese police arrived, rudely dispersed the crowd, and arrested the Swiss couple and Matusse's father. Two hours later at police headquarters in Xai-Xai, the Swiss couple was released after a stern reprimand, and Matusse's father was jailed for thirty days in a cell one meter high, one meter wide, and two meters long.



An excited audience surrounds the mobile cinema truck from the National Film Institute while Ron Hallis and Camarada Caldeira hang the screen on the cantina wall



Dancer Antonio Matusse "telephoning Salazar" in Maputo

photo: Ophera Hallis)



photo : Ophera Hallis

Anastasia likes the sound of her own voice; hearing it on tape for the first time

22/February 1980

When we arrived near the Communal Village Omm and unloaded our equipment cases from the bus out onto the high banks of plowed sand, a group of about twenty children were waiting and began dancing around the cases singing "Cinema! Cinema!" A beautiful young woman heaved my Arriflex case onto her head and we all started off down the path between fields of dried corn stalks and banana trees. More people came to meet us part way and the equipment changed heads.

Finally, we were taken to the assembly place near the cantina and introduced to the village "Responsavel," Eugenio Duvane. Drums were being set up and more villagers were arriving every minute. About fifty children were singing a lovely song. "Hiyieni va camarada, hiyieni yaka ma aldeia. Na aldeia kuni shikolwe, na aldeia kuni a crechi, na aldeia kuni hinkwasu, hiyieni yaka ma aldeia." ("Let us go comrades, let us build communal villages. In the communal villages we have schools, in the communal villages we have day-care centers, in the communal villages we have everything. Let us go comrades, let us build communal villages.") The dancing and singing went on into the darkness as the swarming mosquitoes of November, up from the Limpopo River, began asserting themselves nastily. Someone handed me a piece of white cloth about two feet square to flick about my ears and over my shoulder to drive them away. An oil lamp was lit and put on the table before us casting a warm glow on the unspeakably beautiful faces of the many children curiously observing us. As they were very amused at my awkward use of the cloth, I decided to use it in a way I knew better. I held one end in my teeth and the other at arm's length, and with my free hand projected shadow puppets on the improvised screen. I heard several excited voices say "Cinema! Cinema!" as if this display was a preparation for something they had heard about but never seen. I learned later that the people had been expecting to see a film that night. In his letter, Matusse had failed to explain what kind of film 'muchini' we were bringing. Some explaining had to be done.

Although well-received by the children of the village, and vouched for by Matusse, we were not above suspicion in the eyes of the wise and cautious Eugenio Duvane — understandably, as there had been several reported cases of sabotage in rural areas. Strange visitors would come to a village asking for lodging, then disappear during the night leaving a wake of destruction. Usually the cantina would be burned, and with it, the meager food supplies, and other goods.

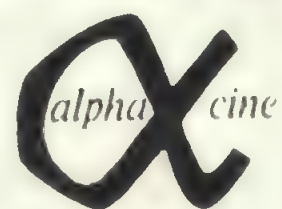
When we arrived in the village Duvane arranged for our equipment to be locked in the cantina. After the singing and dancing, we were taken to a small house with concrete walls and a thatched roof where we were to spend the night. For some time Duvane sat with us, talking, asking questions, sometimes probing for a reaction... Aware of his lingering doubts despite the friendly conversation, I remembered that the Institute had given me an official document to carry us through the military check-points along the road to Xai-Xai. Duvane poured over the letter, and I sensed his relief as he folded it carefully and handed it back to me with a smile. Then, I tried to explain my filmic intentions to him. The spirit of the village was beginning to



photo: Ron Hallis

Ophera Hallis, Camarada Ameline, and Camarada Duvano in the Limpopo Valley with sugar cane and an Arriflex in hand

transform my vision of Mozambique. Until then, I had only seen the urban reality with its many contradictions and lingering vestiges of Portuguese colonialism. Duvane told us the story of the founding of the village in the aftermath of the devastating floods of 1977, footage of which I had seen at the Institute months before. It saddened me to think that my time in the village was so limited, that I would be leaving within twenty-hours. (Little did I know that we would return and spend weeks working on two other films



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The "spirit of the village" contrasted to the urban life transformed Ron Hallis' vision of Mozambique



photo: Ophera Hallis

photo: Ophera Hallis

The Mutimba dancers in the Communal Village Omm: one of many village scenes that inspired Ron Hallis to make a film on Mozambican dance

in which Duvane's participation would be significant.)

The next day we filmed the Sundy 'Cultura,' a weekly 'Festa' in the village meeting place, consisting of songs, poetry, and dancing. Matusse put on an extraordinary display of his dancing talents, with his brother and father beside him. He carried a sign welcoming himself to the village along with some cryptic biographical information. When it was time for us to leave and walk the five kilometers to the highway bus-stop, Duvane gave a speech to the people explaining what we had been doing with the camera and recorder. "People!" he said. "I have a few things to say and it will not be my fault if you don't listen. Everything we have done here today has been seen and recorded by these machines" (pointing to the camera and tape recorder). "Tomorrow these people will be back at our Institute in Maputo, and three months from now they will return to show us what we did here today: how we walked, how we spoke, how we sang, how we danced. All of this and more will be shown to us with other machines. This is all I have to say. It is all true. They will return to show us everything we have done today. Thank you all."

On a starry, moonless night three months later we returned, and projected the film to five thousand people — almost the entire population of the village. The response was electrifying. They wanted to see the film again and again. When the projector lamp faded for the last time and

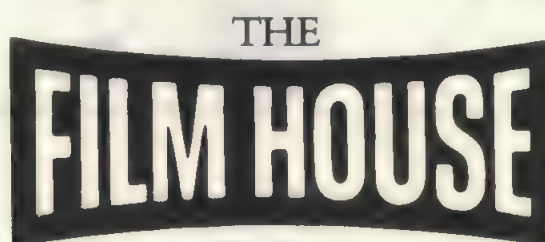
the generator sputtered to a halt the sky took over, and I saw a shooting star streak across the horizon. I stared upward, exhilarated by the screening, the night sky, and the knowledge that we would be staying behind when the mobile cinema truck left the village that night and headed back to Maputo. Then I saw another point of light, moving slowly across the sky. I knew it to be a satellite — weather, communication — reflecting the rays of the sun that would soon be rising over eastern Canada. A young worker from the Institute, standing beside me, saw it too. "Another Rhodesian war plane," he said sadly. "I've seen them many times."

We stayed on for seventeen days living in a small hut with mud-covered reed walls and a corrugated tin roof, sleeping under a mosquito net suspended from three chairs and a table. They were among the happiest days we spent in Mozambique; rising before dawn, walking long distances through the village reaches and down to the Limpopo, filming, recording, translating with Duvane at night in the hut... So much laughter, understanding, learning, and thankfulness for the revolution that brought us together. On the day before leaving, as is the tradition, we planted three manioc roots in the Creche garden. "One for Camarada Ophera," Duvane said, "one for Camarada Ron... and the other for your first child. These plants will be fully grown by the time you return." □

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Who Has Seen the Wind
It Seemed Like a Good
Idea at the Time
The Pyx
Heart Farm
Off Your Rocker

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Kidnapping of the President
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patrick rousseau

Patrick Rousseau's description of a good soundman might read, «Dancing diplomat with a gambling instinct.» Knowing how to 'win his points', he fills the bill.



sound choreography

by barbara samuels

Ah, these imports. The soundman with the bedroom eyes prowls the set of **The Lucky Star** like a Gallic wolf, wending his way through crew members who scurry to prepare a new camera setup. The stop-and-start process of filmmaking doesn't faze the technicians who are used to it, and Patrick Rousseau is a veteran. He has devised his own method for killing time: it is a kind of personal set patrol, a leisurely stroll through the pandemonium that surrounds him. At one point in his rounds, he turns back toward the hub of activity surrounding the camera. "Le son est prêt," he announces to no one in particular, an unnecessary message, as the setup won't be complete for a good ten minutes. He wanders back to his Nagra, plunks himself down behind the machine, and chews thoughtfully on a pen — the quintessential image of Patrick Rousseau, captured by a myriad of set photographers over an impressive number of years.

With those brooding good looks and wicked smile, he might have made a career in front of the camera; instead, he is one of the best soundmen on the Canadian motion picture scene, with a list of screen credits almost unparalleled for a Canadian technician. A naturalized citizen, the thirty-three-year-old native of France has completed all his training and the bulk of his work in Canada. **The Lucky Star** is his fourth feature for 1979, coming in just under the tax deadline, and forming another link in the long association between Rousseau and producer Claude Leger.

"I have very good feelings about this film," Rousseau says during the break in filming. "There's a marvellous intimacy about it, a lot of quiet dialogue between characters. And it brings me and Claude back together again as well." Their careers seem inextricably bound together — the story of two childhood pals who grew up to succeed in different aspects of the Canadian film industry. Eleven years ago, when Leger was intent on forming a documentary film company, buddy Rousseau suggested that Canada might provide a suitable home base, having visited this country himself during Expo '67. They arrived here with plans to produce a study of the Cajuns in Louisiana, sunk all their funds into the project, and watched their dreams dissolve after a car accident destroyed their footage, equipment, and — very nearly — Patrick.

"I ended up in the hospital for a time," he recalls. "Meanwhile, our visas were running out. That led to problems with Immigration, and we got through a long waiting period by working on farms outside of Montreal. I eventually landed a job as a driver on **Eliza's Horoscope**, and when the boomman left the picture, I asked for a crack at that job. The unions didn't exist then, so we weren't breaking any rules: I earned the amazing sum of ninety dollars a week."

Rousseau continued gaining boom experience on one of the first major Canadian productions, **Fortune And Men's Eyes**. He remembers it as "the trickiest job for me, because I didn't speak any English at the time. There was a lot of camera movement, so you had to be able to 'follow' in every sense. So the script girl and I worked out a code: whenever someone was about to speak, she'd tug on my pants, and I'd move the boom over to them. The complicated

nature of the camerawork helped as well, because scenes would run about four minutes sometimes, and that meant a lot of rehearsal. That was how I finally got my 'moves' down."

Rousseau completed approximately eight films as a boomman, an experience that confirmed to him the interdependence of crew members. "The interaction between camera and sound is central to me," he states. "It's like a choreography. A special relationship develops, for instance, between the gaffer and the boomman: he's got to be willing to work *with* you, avoid flagging a light so that it blocks access for the boom to an actor. If they can manage with a light lower down rather than higher up, it'll eliminate boom shadow. You're also working with the camera operator in terms of his framing and your place out of it. And the prop department has to be aware of the problems noisy accessories are going to cause. It's a complicated series of relationships."

In Rousseau's eyes, therefore, the soundman is also "a superb diplomat. It's always a matter of 'winning your points' the first days out, because sound is often one of the least understood departments on set. You've got to get the respect of every technician you work with, and you must have a director who understands the principle behind your work. It all means getting what you demand, which is essential when you're working with live sound. Since Canadian pictures could never afford the expense of dubbing, the crews here know what it means when you ask for silence during a take. With the Europeans, it can be harder."



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Barbara Samuels is a free-lance writer working in Montreal.

He has been known to teach respect for his department. One of the sets on the French production **La Menace** was an old chateau with wooden floors. When the camera crew and assistant directors turned up for the shoot in cowboy boots, Rousseau called a halt to production, and sent someone out to buy running shoes for the crew. The rather indignant technicians "thought I was a bit of a twit until they heard the rushes. That's what you're building to for the first few days, and that's the moment where you gain respect. From that day on, there were no more problems."

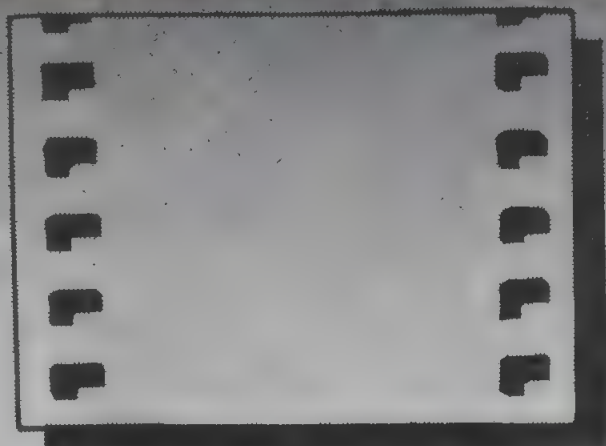
The transition from boomman to sound engineer was "a matter of convincing the director that I was able to do the job. I look at it this way: if I was asking to do his picture as a soundman, I must have been able to do it. If I screwed the job up, the whole industry would know it in no time flat, and that would be of no benefit to me." Rousseau is grateful to former NFB soundman Jos Champagne, with whom he worked three times, and to René Clément's soundman, Guy Villette, for having demonstrated some of the best methods through the example of their work. "The combination of Villette's craft and Clément's technical expertise made **La Course du Lièvre** an incredible experience. When you've got a director who knows the machinery, he forces all the technicians to come up to his standard. That kind of extension of oneself is the best teacher you could ask for."

Finally, it was Denis Héroux who offered Rousseau the chance to make the transition for good. Although Patrick



In one of his characteristic pencil-chewing poses, soundman Patrick Rousseau with Yves Montand and company on the **La Menace** set

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Peterborough, Ontario

first worked as a sound engineer on Jean-Claude Lord's **Les Colombes**, it was Héroux who indicated that the position would be open on his next major film — which turned out to be the Canadian-French co-production **J'ai Mon Voyage**. He worked for Héroux many times after that, and branched out into English Canadian productions as well. One fascinating, recent experience was his teaming with Italian director Lina Wertmuller on her first English-language feature, **The End Of The World In Our Usual Bed In A Nightful Of Rain**. "It took some doing," he reflects, grinning, "to convince Wertmuller that I wasn't trying to interfere with her mise-en-scène. It was her first real experience with live sound: they dub everything in Italy. It was also Giancarlo Giannini's first English-language work, and he was concerned that the quality be of the highest. That's a perfect example of how essential it is for

the soundman to 'win his points' right off the top. She's a tough, extraordinary lady to work with, and it turned into an excellent working relationship."

Straddling two different film traditions, as he does, Rousseau's perspective on the qualities of the Canadian industry vis-à-vis its European counterpart is unique. "It's a matter of different sensibilities," he insists, "and one is not necessarily better than the other. I believe that a European director of photography is going to light the interior of a cathedral with a more knowing hand because he's got years of tradition behind him. That architecture is part of his background, his roots. But an understanding of the North American context is usually North American territory. It's tough to think of any European who's made the transition successfully. So I think there are points on both sides."

He believes Canadian crews are "well up to international calibre now," and sees the tax shelter, if properly used, as "a kind of door-opener. When it comes off, the producers will have made the connection with, say, the head of Paramount in the States. Those links are essential if you want a world-ranking industry." To attain that end, there are elements here he would like to see altered: "We haven't got enough special effects sound people, and we're going to need them badly at the rate we're expanding. I'd also like to see a Technical Commission of Cinema Experts get after the theatres here, as they do in France. They should be forced to conform to a standard, because otherwise, you're working for the rushes and that's it." He recalls seeing *Violette Nozière* in France, and then again in Montreal, "and believe me, it was a different movie the second time around. The quality had disintegrated badly. The exhibition halls just have to be improved."

He watches Rod Steiger make his way through the jumble of cables and lights that clutter the studio floor, then disappear into the mockup stable that is the centre of activity. Patrick shakes his head somewhat regretfully. "When you have good feelings about a film, as I do about this one, you feel badly about your lack of input into post-production. It would be wonderful to become involved in the sound editing, but how can I possibly commit myself to something that'll happen months from now — who knows what production I'll be on then, where I'll be?" He is interrupted by the assistant director, who pokes his head out of the stable toward the waiting crew.

"Alors, on est prêt?"

"On est toujours prêt," Rousseau retorts, as Esther Auger comes to collect her boom from its holder on Rousseau's table. "It should also be noted," he grins slyly, "that I'm one of the few soundmen to work with a female boom operator." Auger grimaces ferociously, then pulls her boss's hair with affection. She hauls the boom off into the stable as Rousseau slides headphones over his ears.

"Interdependence," he says again. "We're like dancers who depend upon each other getting our moves right. And above all, mutual respect." The studio bell sounds, the assistant director calls "Motor," and Rousseau switches his Nagra into gear.

"Speed," he replies, setting that complicated series of relationships into action all over again. □

Filmography:

Patrick Rousseau

Boom Man:

Eliza's Horoscope — dir. Gordon Sheppard

Fortune And Men's Eyes — dir. Harvey Hart

Journey — dir. Paul Almond

La Maudite Gallette — dir. Denis Arcand

La Course du Lièvre — dir. René Clement (France)

Tauro — dir. Clement Perron

Quelques Arpents de Neige — dir. Denis Héroux

Sound Engineer:

Les Colombes — dir. Jean-Claude Lord

J'ai Mon Voyage — dir. Denis Héroux

Mustang — dir. Marcel Lefevre

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris — dir. Denis Héroux

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz — dir. Ted Kotcheff

The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane — dir. Nicholas Gessner

Special Magnum — dir. Alberto de Martino (Italy)

Angela — dir. Boris Sagal

The End of the World in Our Usual Bed in a Nightful of Rain — dir. Lina Wertmuller (Italy)

La Menace — dir. Alain Corneau (France)

Blood Relatives — dir. Claude Chabrol

Violette Nozière — dir. Claude Chabrol

City on Fire — dir. Alvin Rakoff

It Rained All Night The Day I Left — dir. Nicholas Gessner

Yesterday — dir. Larry Kent

Girls — dir. Just Jaeckin

Dirty Tricks — dir. Alvin Rakoff

The Lucky Star — dir. Max Fischer

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Videotape Editing and Program Assembly

no. 8 in a series of 10

by rodger j. ross

When the Ampex video recording system was announced in 1956, almost at once users began insisting on the need for editing facilities. At the time, the best suggestion Ampex engineers could offer was to cut the videotapes with a razor blade and join the two ends together with a piece of sticky tape. But it was not long before much more sophisticated splicing and editing methods were devised.

A Canadian, Norman Bounsall, who went from the National Film Board in Montreal to work at the Ampex Corp. in the United States, was responsible for a major advance — electronic editing — described in the February 1962 issue of SMPTE Journal.

Electronic editing enables portions of recorded programs (scenes) to be dubbed (electronically transferred) to a program master tape leaving the original recordings intact. No cutting or splicing is involved in electronic editing. The video and audio tracks on the tape being used for assembling a program (the master tape) can be erased automatically in exactly the proper locations in an already transferred scene, so that new video and audio tracks (for the next scene) can be laid down on the tape, giving the effect of a straight cut between the two scenes.

To make a splice between two scenes, two recorders are needed, one in the playback and the other in the record mode. The original recording, which may be from a live television camera or from film transferred in telecine, is placed on the playback machine, while a blank videotape is placed on the record machine to become the master program tape. At

the start, a portion of the original recording containing the first scene is dubbed onto the master tape. The next scene is then located in the original recordings and cued up on the playback machine. (In the early days of electronic editing the practice was adopted of putting cue marks on the tapes with a felt pen to indicate the splice point between scenes.) The two machines are then started, both in the playback mode, and at the point indicated by the cue marks, the machine carrying the master tape is switched by the operator to the record mode. Sophisticated solid state electronic circuitry takes over to make the splice at the next following frame synchronizing pulse.

Programmed Editing with Frame Accuracy

Electronic editing opened up a whole new world of program production possibilities on videotape. But even with this important development the editing process was still a painstaking and time-consuming operation, in no way comparable with film editing methods. A basic difficulty with videotape is that the recorded pictures can be made visible on a television picture monitor only with the playback machine running at precisely the right speed (locked to television synchronizing pulses).

While electronic editing considerably enhanced program production on videotape, production people and videotape operators soon began to realize its limitations. Its greatest weakness was the dependence on the operator's reaction time and manual dexterity. Finding just the right places in the action to make a "splice" between two scenes required running the machines back and forth over the same parts of the scenes several times. Then, in making the edit, it was only by good luck that the splice between the two scenes occurred in just the right part of the action, dependent on the operator depressing the record button at exactly the right instant.

The next step was the development of programmed editing with frame accuracy. This was accomplished automatically by means of tone bursts recorded in the cue track of the videotape. This development offered the very great advantage that an edit could be previewed (simulated) — and if necessary adjusted — before actually making the edit on the master program tape.

With this method of program assembly tone bursts are recorded in the cue track at the points where edits are to take place, determined as before by playing back the tapes several times to find just the right points in the action. Then, instead of putting cue marks on the tapes, tone bursts are recorded by pressing a button. In the preview mode, the tone bursts automatically switch the machine outputs to the television picture monitor only, to show where the edit takes place. If the result is not acceptable, the tone bursts in the cue track can be advanced or retarded by any desired number of video frames to obtain just the right effect. Then the edit can be made on the master tape by switching the machine from "preview" to "edit" mode.

SMPTE Time and Control Code

This development greatly eased the task of the operator in making edits and seemed at the time to be the last word in sophisticated videotape editing. But there was still the problem of locating a particular scene in the original recordings, a task that took up an inordinate amount of time during videotape editing sessions. Until the introduction of random access editing in the late 1960's, production people could only give the machine operator the approximate location of a wanted scene in a recording, usually by elapsed videotape running time. Only after a scene had been located and verified could the editing points be selected.

Several companies, including Advartel in Toronto and Central Dynamics in Montreal, developed systems of time coding

*Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, **Television Film Engineering and Color Film for Color Television**, has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently Chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.*

videotape to identify recorded scenes, and to enable the playback machine to automatically locate the start of any scene in a recording by the corresponding time code. The "address" in the SMPTE time and control code, eventually adopted and made official in American National Standard C98.12-1975, consists of binary code groups recorded in the cue track, identifying each frame by a unique number. The code numbers can be displayed on an electronic counter, and used to identify scenes as the time recordings are being made, and also to provide instructions for the machine operator during videotape editing. These numbers can also be used to "instruct" the videotape machine to locate a scene in the recordings and cue up the first frame of the scene on a picture monitor, by simply punching the corresponding numbered buttons on a keyboard.

Electronic Post-Production Systems

In spite of these really astonishing developments, videotape editing was still being hampered by the inflexibility and high costs of available systems, and especially the amount of time needed to make editing decisions, while simultaneously tying up scarce and very costly professional broadcasting facilities. Among the many proposals made to overcome these obstacles was a system developed by CBS Television Network jointly with CMX Systems in California.

In the CMX electronic production system all the original program recordings, along with the SMPTE time and control code in the cue tracks, were transferred to video discs, mounted in packs with a recording capacity of about 5 minutes, 12 disc packs for one hour. To begin an editing session all the scenes identified by their time and control codes were stored as an edit list (menu) in a computer. The editor could call up any scene with a "light pen" applied to the appropriate item in the edit list appearing on the face of a television picture monitor. Then, from a display of code blocks indicating the various machine functions, any desired operation could be initiated with the light pen.

When the decision-making process in the editing of a program was completed, the computer printed out on a magnetic cassette all of the decisions made by the editor. This cassette was then used to automatically assemble the program on a master program tape, taking video and audio from the original recordings. In this process up to six 2-in. quadruplex recorders could be used, one in the record mode (the master program tape) and the other five playing back portions of the original recordings as called for by the computer.

This early development has survived at the CMX 600 editing systems. Other models, including CMX 300 and 50, are also available, as well as similar systems from a number of other manufacturers.

On-Line and Off-Line Editing Methods

During the past two or three years the microprocessor has become the key building block in videotape editing systems, and the application of the computer to videotape editing has vastly enhanced the flexibility of videotape post-production.

Two methods of editing are commonly used today. The on-line method consists of editing the original videotape recordings to obtain the master program tape. In professional program production all of this work is usually carried out on 2-in. quadruplex videotape recording machines. Off-line editing techniques have been developed to enable time-consuming editing decisions to be made on another lower cost videotape medium — usually 3/4-in. video cassettes.

On-line editing is the most convenient method in many of the simpler, less time-consuming decision-making situations. Programs are built up scene-by-scene, by dubbing (transferring) portions of the original recordings on one machine to the master program tape on the other machine, utilizing, as a rule, programmed editing facilities as already described. One troublesome problem with this editing method is coming out at the end with a program exactly the right length to fit into a scheduled television time period. Sometimes there may be no alternative but to physically cut and splice the master tape to take out part of a scene.

With the off-line editing method problems of this kind should not occur since programs are built up scene-by-scene from edit lists prepared from the time codes recorded on the videotapes. At some stage before editing commences, time-coded 3/4-in. cassette copies are made from the 2-in. original recordings, with the time code

readout (recognizable numbers) superimposed in the pictures. These 3/4-in. video cassettes are then taken away by the production group to prepare the edited programs.

As the video cassettes are being reviewed in less costly helical scan machines, an edited program structure begins to take shape, and the edit list is prepared by noting down on a sheet of paper selected scene descriptions, reel numbers and the time code numbers at the beginning and end of each selected scene. Sometimes a video "workprint" is made by assembling scenes on another 3/4-in. video cassette in accordance with the edit list, for final viewing and approval before work starts on the assembly of the 2-in. quadruplex master program tape.

With some computer-assisted editing systems, the editing decisions are punched as code blocks into a paper tape; with other types of equipment the editing decisions are recorded on a floppy disc, a magnetically coated flexible disc about the size of a 45 rpm. audio record, with a capacity to store up to 3000 edits on each side. Upon completion of the cassette editing, auto-assembly of the 2-in. program master tape can begin, controlled by the coded information in the punched paper tape or floppy disc.

Writing in the August 1977 issue of SMPTE Journal, Arthur Schneider, an experienced videotape editor, describes what he calls "Edit List Management," the techniques of edit list preparation "understandable" to the computer. Summing up, he complains that it should not be necessary to go through a series of complicated keyboard steps just to make a simple edit. Some computer-assisted editing systems tend to make the editor feel in need of an engineering degree, but some new models now provide keyboards with all the editorial functions identified by individual keys. Also, systems are being developed to "clean up" edit lists, detecting and correcting errors before auto-assembly commences.

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BOOKSHELF

by george l. george

Recent French Books

The "Cinéma d'aujourd'hui" collection, one of the best French publications dealing in depth with topical film subjects, has issued **Actualité du cinéma américain**. This insightful and sophisticated survey examines the new orientation in U.S. cinema, and reflects the younger filmmakers' perception of the current state of American society: their movies' esthetics and themes, their awareness of politics, violence, family life, women's liberation are explored with a sharp understanding of the issues involved. Included is an annotated listing of directors and performers leading this contemporary trend (Lherminier FF35).

The film critiques of a well-known French literary figure are published in book form: **Philippe Soupault — Écrits de cinéma**. Collected by Alain and Colette Virmaux, these reviews of the 1918-31 period demonstrate his appreciation of the essentially visual nature of the medium, far in advance of most of his contemporaries (Plon FF58).

Interviews by J.A. Gili with outstanding Italian directors — Bertolucci, Comencini, Petri, Risi, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani and many others — are assembled in **Le cinéma italien**. It covers a wide range of subjects from art to politics in a remarkable display of intellectual brilliance and originality (Editions 10/18 FF20).

Several volumes of photographs, culled from films considered daringly explicit in the '50s and early '60s, have been consolidated by Lo Duca and Maurice Bessy into a single tome, **L'érotisme au cinéma**. No hardcore there, not even soft porn in these artfully composed and beautifully reproduced stills, a nostalgic homage to the hardy precursors of a freer cinema (Lherminier FF225).

In "Les cahiers de la cinémathèque," a valuable collection of texts published by La Cinémathèque de Toulouse, appears an informative and scholarly study, **Pour une histoire du mélodrame au cinéma**. The genre, which started with the earliest movies and declined in the late '30s, is surveyed in this well-documented monograph through knowledgeable essays on its most representative films, directors and interpreters (FF50).

Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

Aspects of Cinema

Film editor Ralph Rosenblum, in **When the Shooting Stops**, discusses the art and craft of his métier with extensive experience and keen understanding. During his work on many Woody Allen films and on those of Sidney Lumet, Mel Brooks and William Friedkin, he explored the full scope of creative film editing, and shares his insights in this revealing and highly professional book (Viking \$12.95).

Independent producers, intent on glory and profits (mostly profits), will find in Sheldon Tromberg's **Making Money Making Movies** a wealth of practical advice on film production and distribution. A particularly valuable section carries a detailed budget for a \$750,000 feature, realistic, well-organized and ingenious (Franklin Watts \$6.95).

Two classical works by eminent film historian Lewis Jacobs appear in new editions, revised and up-dated by the author. **The Emergence of Film Art** is a significant collection of texts that illuminate the development of the motion picture as an artistic medium, and **The Documentary Tradition** offers a selection of writings by well-known filmmakers, specialists of the genre. Both volumes, edited by Jacobs, contribute to the understanding and appreciation of the essential role cinema has played in the cultural growth of society (Norton \$19.95 ea.).

The traumatic experience that affected many personalities in the film industry during the transition from the silent to the sound era is discussed in **The Shattered Silents** by Alexander Walker. The radical changes of a period that marked the rebirth of an art are evoked vividly in this well-researched and engaging volume (Morrow \$10.95).

In **Landmark Films**, movie critic William Wolf (and Lillian Kramer Wolf) assess the influence of cinema on our perception of the meaning of our lives. This knowledgeable and discerning study examines 38 important movies, further probing their impact in meaningful interviews with directors and performers (Paddington Press \$14.95).

The Western film genre is informatively explored by William R. Meyer in **The Making of the Great Westerns**, a thorough going study of 30 of the best prototypes. The book focuses on the collaborative element in the production of these films, evaluating their part in screen history,

their public acceptance and critics' reaction (Arlington \$20).

Patricia Erens, in **Sexual Stratagems**, plumbs the portrayal of women in films, a controversial subject that has aroused heated arguments. Her extensive collection of opinions and documents on this many-sided issue provides a wealth of material that further illuminates stressful problems of our rapidly evolving society (Horizon \$15/8.95).

Diligently researched by Phyllis Rauch Klopman, **Frame by Frame: A Black Filmography** offers an annotated listing of over 3000 films dealing with black themes or subject matter. Both Afro-American and Third World Blacks are covered in this scholarly reference work, an essential tool acknowledging the presence and participation of Blacks in movies, and their contribution to the art (Indiana U. Press \$25).

James Robert Parish and William T. Leonard have compiled, in **The Funsters**, a substantial survey of some 60 celebrated comedians of all times, including Mischa Auer, ZaSu Pitts, Patsy Kelly, Polly Moran. This massive 752-page volume accumulates a mountain of data, providing definitive reference material to scholars and buffs alike (Arlington \$30).

Considering the mixture of art, technique and personalities that characterizes the cinema medium, editor Don Allen presents in **The World of Film and Filmmakers** a panoramic view of the industry in a superbly illustrated and explicitly written large format volume (Crown \$19.95).

In **Storytelling and Mythmaking**, Frank McConnell establishes the connection between film and literature by pointing out themes of famous literary works that appear in popular and classical movies (Oxford U. Press \$13.95).

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BOOK REVIEWS

The American Nightmare: Essays On The Horror Film.

by Robin Wood, Andrew Britton, Richard Lippe and Tony Williams, Festival of Festivals, Toronto, 1979.

Readers familiar with Robin Wood's writings on the cinema will recognize this book as a collection of beautifully stated insights. Wood has a rare ability for discovering patterns of meaning in movies through a peculiar combination of mixed methods. Moreover, he is faithful to the cinema's varied character, examining movies such as **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** that few critics take seriously. In **The American Nightmare**, Wood's colleagues Andrew Britton, Richard Lippe and Tony Williams have assisted him with papers on **Martin**, **Jaws**, **The Exorcist** and the symbolism of evil. Unfortunately, all four authors share a fault: they fail to establish a theoretical perspective, and **The American Nightmare** builds a methodological nightmare from shreds and tatters of methods.

Wood refers confidently to the "horror-film's" generic status without revealing his criteria for classification. A "horror-film" appears to be nothing more than a narrative dealing with, or depicting, a "monster." But what is a monster? One may search the history of philosophy for a precise definition without finding the answer. In literature and the cinema, monsters frequently exemplify problems of power and free will: for example, **Gulliver's Travels**, **The Incredible Shrinking Man**, or **Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman**. Yet monsters also take the form of "inhuman" or "incongruous" beings.

Frank N. Furter in **The Rocky Horror Picture Show** is alleged by Wood to be a monster because he represents our fear of libidinal energy. What is the evidence for this claim? Frank does arrive on earth from a "land of night" (the planet Transsexual in the galaxy of Transylvania). He does commit fearful, violent acts. He is "unfashionably" dressed in female "undies." But surely both Frank's murdering tendencies and his costume suggest parody. In fact, he pokes fun at transves-

titles and homosexuals, in addition to "straights." He suggests a parody of drag, a parody developed into a parody of itself. Perhaps he is not a monster but a comedian.

Occasionally, Wood employs the term "monster" to designate an abnormally cruel or wicked person. Yet, if this is really what a monster is, any number of motion pictures qualify as "horror-films." How about **Warrendale** or **Nuit et Brouillard**: are they "horror-films"?

Wood's classification of the cinema into radical and reactionary factions is similarly perplexing and seems to depend upon affective rather than analytical reading of movie-texts. Does **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** treat "cannibalism" as he claims, or, more accurately, "carnivorous behavior"? Can it not be read as a sixties text directly influenced by **Diet For A Small Planet**? Why does Wood believe that **Shivers (The Parasite Murders)** is "single-mindedly about sexual liberation"? Perhaps it is really concerned with urban planning. If this obvious surface-concern is not the case, what function does the movie's tongue-in-cheek "starliner" prologue serve? **Shivers** specifically examines the physical and social space with which apartment dwellers surround themselves. The narrative's infamous bug-parasites may be in bad taste, but they grow logically from the vulgarity of urban high-rise life. Wood may have misread the "tone" of **Shivers**: it owes something to the anti-art of dada yet has the glossy exaggeration of a Warner Brothers cartoon with built-in irony. Does the narrative view sexual liberation "with unmitigated horror," or do the narrative's characters (most of whom represent the Montreal middle-classes) represent that view?

Wood's paper "The Dark Mirror" is probably one of the few interesting pieces on Murnau in English. Unfortunately, the argument is marred by a reference to the "unhealthiness" of Expressionism. Wood is mistaken to believe that German Expressionism was little more than a "style," an "ethos," or an "atmosphere." The character of expressionist art, its intensity, energy, fateful perspective, its outward projection of psychological events, represented a confrontation with Freudian pessimism and with the fin-de-siècle attack on idealism. It encompassed deterministic conclusions that, however unpalatable, cannot be reduced to the com-

forting platitudes of Leavisite "humanism."

Wood sets out to combine analysis of the content of "horror-film" with his account of "the other" (the monster) as it functions within our culture." Hence, despite an oft-stated aversion to theoretical discussion, he entertains a theory of the cinema. However, the aforementioned characterization of movies and society remains undeveloped in the book. What connections can be drawn between cinematic content and audience beliefs or values? Keeping the author's Marxist-Freudian epistemology in mind, should we look for characteristics of a collective audience psyche in the cinema's product? Does a necessary relationship exist between conscious consumption of movie-content and that content's "unconscious significance"? This is a tough question to answer since Wood does not provide statistics regarding the box-office popularity of the movies in question.

Robert McMillan



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Robert McMillan is a Film instructor at Carleton University in Ottawa.

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FILM REVIEWS

Claude Lelouch's *A Nous Deux*

p./d./sc. Claude Lelouch asst. d. Jean-Claude Ventura, Roger De Monestrol ph. Bernard Zitzermann asst. cam. Bruno de Keyser, Michel Mandreau ed. Sophie Bhaud, Hugues Darmois sd. mix. Harald Maury cont. Lise Ferran, France Boudreau key grip Henri Cayrol grip Yves Fayt key gaf. Joël David a.d. Jean-Louis Poveda set design. Claude Marchand m. Francis Lai singing Fabienne Thibault lyrics Pierre Barouh cost. design. Marie-Françoise Perrochon wardrobe asst. Adrienne Bacou cast. Arlette Gordon make-up Alfonso Gola hair. Jean-Pierre Berroyer l.p. Catherine Deneuve, Jacques Dutronc, Jacques Villeret, Gérard Caillaud, Bernard Crommbey, Paul Préboist, Gilberte Geniat, Bernard Lecoq, Jean-François Rémi, Monique Melinand, Guy Retore, Marie-Pierre De Gérando, Karine, Xavier Saint-Macary, Evelyne Ker, Anne Jousset, Simon Lelouch, Olivier Lai, Natalie Caron, Jacques Godin, Émile Genest, Daniel Auteuil, Alain David, Jean-Paul Muel, Bunny Godillot, Myriam Mézières, Evelyne Gilbert p. Claude Lelouch, Denis Héroux, Joseph F. Beaubien, co. p. a Canadian-French co-production p. manager (France) Daniel Deschamps, (Canada) Justine Héroux unit man. (France) Dominique Lallier, (Canada) Micheline Garant p.c. Claude Lelouch, Denis Héroux and Joseph-F. Beaubien col. 35mm running time 90 min. dist. (Canada) Cine 360 Inc.

For whatever reasons, films from all genres and filmmaking cultures have been constructed around the exploits of a man and a woman who share adventures and come to love each other. Recently, this includes many interesting love-on-the-run crime dramas. Unfortunately, the promise of something interesting, suggested by the early moments of Claude Lelouch's *A Nous Deux*, is soon dissipated when the couple comes together and starts running. For all its cinematic show and flash, *A Nous Deux* is a destitute film. Lelouch has the technique — as one would expect from a director who was initially a cinematographer — but in this film at least, that technique is confined to gaudy flourishes. The film itself has no real substance, and is constantly plagued by a lack of stylistic integrity.

A Nous Deux begins in France in the 1950's among gangsters who have become rich during the occupation. The opening sequences are gripping — a piano sing-song, the Marquise's face slapped, a brutal retaliation. The music, setting,



Momentary stand-in for Jacques Dutronc, director Claude Lelouch spells it out for Catherine Deneuve on location with *A Nous Deux*

and above all the moving camera elicit strong emotional responses, and the elliptical links between scenes prime one for some intellectual payoff. Yet, for all this emotive strength, there is no developed understanding of character or situation. When the film switches to present time, one is exposed to the most banal sociological determinism. "Like Father, like son," is the reductionistic formula upheld throughout. Simon Chassaing's crimes are constantly explained as a product of his family's past. When hiding Simon after his jail-break, Uncle Music says it reminds him of the time thirty years ago when he hid Simon's father. Simon is a crook because it's "natural."

The same false profundity characterizes the rest of the film. After a particularly savage rape, Françoise engages in a career of seducing prominent men, setting them up for the police to collect evidence of adultery. The "dime-store Freud" explanation of her motive cannot bear the weight of importance given it.

Introduced separately, these two characters are fated to meet. Again, a simple reductionistic quality informs the film. In a different setting Simon can escape the burdens of his past and find a new life in

"honesty" together with Françoise. Similarly, Françoise can get beyond her shattering experience through "honesty" with Simon.

The self-enclosed couple is a dubious romantic ideal, and Lelouch has difficulty in handling this content. He uses whatever emotive technique that first comes to mind, with little regard for formal integrity. His stylistic range simply provides a mixed bag of effects to draw upon. Consequently, the film is unified only by the love-and-chase plot.

The Canadian money that went into this co-production resulted in its strangest quirk. Why Québec is even mentioned when obviously New York was always envisaged as the city of freedom remains a mystery. The traditional border-crossing adds nothing, and the distant shot of New York appears distinctly un-New Yorkish. One wonders if it might not, in fact, be Montreal!

Also unfortunate are the film's references to Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*. The comparison to that famous couple's adventures only emphasizes the essentially hollow experience of *A Nous Deux*.

Mark Mercer

FILM REVIEWS

Ivan Reitman's Meatballs

d. Ivan Reitman asst. d. Gord Robinson sc. Dan Goldberg, Len Blum, Janis Allen ph. Don Wilder sd. Richard Lightstone p. designer Judy Gellman l.p. Bill Murray, Kate Lynch, Russ Banham, Margot Pinvidic, Todd Hoffman, Norma Dell'Agnesse, Jack Blum, Sarah Torgov, Keith Knight, Kristine DeBelle, Matt Craven, Cindy Girling exec. p. John Dunning, André Link p. Dan Goldberg p. manager Bob Bayliss p.c. Haliburton Films Production, 1978 col. 35 mm Can. dist. Cinepix

All the ingredients are there: the pompous camp director, the over-sexed head counsellor, the not-too-good looking female staff, dozens of screaming kids, and of course, the ritzy rival encampment across the lake. **Meatballs** depicts the typical summer camp. From ingenious pranks to romantic flings, the spirit of many a summer month in the Haliburton wilderness is recaptured for those lucky enough to have attended one of these camps. For those who lack the experience, the film offers ninety minutes of good fun, laughter and release.

Canadian successor to Ivan Reitman's **Animal House** (a film about a fraternity of rejects situated somewhere in the mid-U.S.), **Meatballs** employs the same basic style of slapstick humour.

Bill Murray, as head Meatball at Camp North Star, is much like the Belushi character in **Animal House**. In fact, both Belushi and Murray owe their exposure to **Saturday Night Live**. Murray also toured with the original troupe of Second City, so he comes to the Canadian setting well-seasoned for his role as Tripper, the quick-witted camp clown. At times he tends to be as obnoxious as Belushi and yet holds a kind of fascination for the



Two beefy contestants in **Meatballs**, with judges Harvey Atkin and Bill Murray presiding

viewer. Tripper is the counsellor who might be voted Most Likely To Succeed — be it through consoling a homesick camper or 'making it' with one of his female associates when the campfire is over.

From the word 'go' we see the side of

camp life that is most remembered — not the petty arguments or too much of the homesickness, but mostly the fun and comradeship that evolves after two weeks at a summer retreat.

The opening scene introduces the film's two rival camps. Larry Solway, as part of the news crew covering the beginning of the summer camp season, interviews Murray to find out about camp life. Murray, however, pretending to be the director of the rival camp, Mohawk, across the lake, advertises its loose lifestyle and degenerate game-playing. All this is said with a dead pan expression belying Murray's dry wit.

The annual Olympiad provides the focus for the good-spirited rivalry between the two camps. Predictably, the good guys seem to lose at everything. Mohawk has the better players, better uniforms, and even the better looks. How could they lose? Then there's North Star — they've got Tripper, and... well, you don't even wonder why they lose, 'cause after

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all they're a bunch of meatballs. But they do have spirit and they do know how to play dirty! With Tripper's cheer of "It just doesn't matter," the Meatballs go nuts. They turn Globetrotters with their antics on the basketball court and win, buns down, in the hotdog-eating contest.

This year North Star is determined to win. After much contestation about who is to replace the injured Cindy in the big finale, the cross-country race, the task is entrusted to Rudy, the camp runt. In a magnificent sequence following Rudy and his Mohawk opponent through the surrounding woods, Rudy's runt-turned-star performance earns North Star the gold medal for the first time in the history of the two camps.

No camp life would be complete without at least a hint of illicit sex. **Meatballs** abounds in inoffensive innuendoes — and the occasional offensive one as well! The CITs (counsellors-in-training), provide the entertainment as they conduct their own sex education course. The initiation

of Nerd, one of the junior staff, takes the male half of the crew on a mission to the girls' cabin, where a typical hen session, complete with 'true romance' magazine readings, is underway. Safely tucked under the cabin, the guys settle in for some cheap thrills — a perfect setting for the slapstick humour to follow. The girls, discovering their peeping toms, succeed in partially disrobing them and scattering them helter-skelter back to their own cabin — the battle lost, but the war just begun!

Although the critics haven't been overly kind, **Meatballs** has proved to be a great Canadian box office success. With its more-or-less universal theme, the film appeals to all ages and all persuasions. The difficulties encountered in shooting the film with so many amateurs — including the actual campers of a session at White Pines — seem to have been worth it in the end. Ivan Reitman, I sympathize.

Michèle Maheux

André Blanchard's L'Hiver Bleu

d. André Blanchard asst. d. Camille Belle-humeur sc. André Blanchard, Jeanne-Mance Déglise ph. Alain Dupras, Madeleine Ste-Marie, Jacques Marcotte ed. Francis Van Den Heuvel, Ginette Leduc sd. Robert Girard set dir. Luc Quesnel, Andrée Barrette, Louise Laferté (script) l.p. Christiane Lévesque, Nicole Scant, Michel Chénier, Roland Pelletier, Claire Nault, Père Léo Cantin p. Marguerite Duparc, Cinak p. sec. Claudine Fauque p. manager Louis Dalaire col. 16 mm running time 84 min. dist. Les Films du Crépuscule.

Now that Canada and Quebec have entered an era of big-budget productions — for better, for worse, and for however long — some old questions have been raised. Is marketability incompatible with artistic vision? Do investment returns rate higher than didacticism and the altering of our sensibilities? What about national cinema? Are big production values inseparable from political bias (most often capitalist)?

Answers to these questions may be offered by considering two recent, would-be, anti-establishment, Hollywood films: **Apocalypse Now** and **China Syndrome**. Both are less successful in shaking the status quo than in glorifying the big-buck technology and power-hungry mentality they decry. Both are slick products which inspire awe and stupefy. (**Apocalypse** is a

great recruiting film, **China Syndrome** a star vehicle for U.S. back-up systems that work.) Considering this, and the Canadian social and political problems which won't disappear in a cloud of Clark's consensus, **L'Hiver Bleu** (Blue Winter) can be neither sunk because it's out of synch, nor obliterated for its blizzard of graininess.

Moreover, this one-hour and 20-minute film, written and directed by unknown Andre Blanchard, appears to have been hand-crafted with his friends, and com-

pleted with the help of most of Rouyn Noranda's population, businesses and community organizations — which also star.

As a decidedly low-budget Quebecois film, **L'Hiver Bleu** is interesting for several reasons.

First, it may be an anachronistic post-script to the wave of films made independently by Quebecois for Quebecois. This 'movement' peaked in the early 70's and faded with the P.Q.'s election — for which it may in part be thanked or blamed, depending on one's political persuasion and belief in the extent to which films actually sensitize populations, culturally and politically. Certainly these films provided training for many now working on the big-budget — mostly English — films.

Second, **L'Hiver Bleu** could be the first ripple in a new wave, by a new generation of independent filmmakers. Like its predecessors it touches on problems of labour, the disaffected students and their instructors, the young unemployed, the family, and language. Unlike its predecessors, this film dwells little on sexual awakening — which seems a fait accompli, considering jokes about 52 orgasms! The young appear afflicted with late '70s ennui, in contrast to the fervent political and social commitment of the '60s.

Third, the problems explored are not necessarily the consequences of Quebec's relationship with Canada. Rather, they seem to arise from regional disparities and difficulties in communicating with Quebec City. The climax — if there is one — comes when, after a struggle, the leader of the Association des Accidentés (The Rouyn Noranda Injured Workers



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FILM REVIEWS

Assoc.) is finally permitted to contact the Premier's office. He shouts into the phone, "You must pay attention to the workers of Rouyn Noranda, to the problems of northwest Quebec!" Socially and topographically the region is more closely related to northern Ontario.

Although less interesting than the structure, what story there is concerns two girls, Nicole and Christiane, who leave the industrially depressed area of Val d'Or to go to the big city — Rouyn Noranda. There they are welcomed into a communal house, rented for \$50 a month. The residents pay \$15 a week room and board, if unemployed, \$25 if working. The occupants aren't flower children, but frequently "work in their imagination," drawing, painting, singing and drinking moderately.

Christiane chooses to attend the local CEGEP (community college), and with another house resident, Michel, an instructor, attempts to become involved in labour issues. Michel underscores the late '70s problems of activism when he says during a protest, "When I went to university we were always ready to hit the streets. Now



Feeling right at home, in a scene from *L'Hiver Bleu*

the protests are in the attaché cases of some professors, while everyone else watches TV." At the film's end he leaves for the Gaspé, for "the sea and the boats."

Nicole decides to work, to save money to escape to South America. She begins as a waitress, her activities filmed in cinema vérité. This is followed by a stint as receptionist. Eventually she leaves the house because she can't stand the student milieu.

One night the two girls meet in the toilet of a bar and the renewal of friendship is shown in a long static shot of two, closed, water closet doors. A nice distancing device.

There is nothing cathartic in the film; it has the look of cinema vérité but was undoubtedly scripted and shot, for the most part, with a static camera to extend time.

Christiane, the archetypal activist with wire glasses, severely pulled-back hair and a few pimples, opts to stay at school for all its limitations and those of the town, both shown in documentary footage.

Nicole, more romantically cast with long black hair and deep blue eyes (which she casts deeply into the camera in an homage to the '60s, leftist, European filmmakers), leaves for adventure elsewhere.

Dramatically, these episodes transpire over the winter. But the workers' struggles, with which the episodes are intercut, are obviously the result of one afternoon's documentary shooting (the clothing, lighting, placards, by-standers give it away). Thus, documentary time, dramatic time and real time are in conflict. This forces the viewer to decide with which time he or

she is most comfortable. To accept dramatic time is to relegate the workers and their time to second place; conversely, to be most comfortable with documentary time is to negate the dramatic illusion. The viewer is left with real time, and a film he or she can only study, not be involved in.

This quasi-Brechtian device, along with the episodic undramatic construction, the musical usage, and the dense graininess, duplicate '60s experiments by self-proclaimed, leftist, European filmmakers. The politics of the form are further evidenced by gratuitously intercut, Eisenstein-like, factory sequences and sequences of the bleak snow-covered countryside, in which the color has been shifted to blue to add expression to the film's mood.

None of the actors are identified by name. Despite the high quality of their acting, or non-acting, they were presumably drawn from the community. The Institut Québécois de Cinéma and The Canadian Film Development Corporation were credited with production assistance, as was Eldorado Mines.

The day before its seven-day commercial run closed, this film attracted a total of six viewers for two showings, and this on Rue St-Denis near two universities. A comment on our times. For lack of an audience *L'Hiver Bleu* will probably decompose on a shelf somewhere and, if lucky, may see the darkened light of a theatre or church basement once a year...

And yes, we must pay attention to northwest Quebec.

Doug Isaac

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*!?! Unions

d./sc. Seaton Findlay ph. John C. Walker ed. Bob Cooper sd.re.rec. Paul Sharpe m. Stock (Alan Parker, composer) p.c. Crawley Films col. 16mm running time 27 min. 47 sec. dist. Canadian Labour Congress, 1979.

Strange title for a film, ***!?! Unions**. The Canadian Labour Congress spent \$100,000 to have the film made, believing that a lot of Canadians hate unions. Most people only think about them when they feel the effects of a strike. ("Goddamn unions!") Or when they read in newspaper editorials the dire warnings of Big Labour's power ("Goddamn unions!") Or when the price of a bus ticket goes up after a new contract has been signed. ("It's the goddamn unions, I tell ya!")

***!?! Unions** presents a series of vignettes that show unions doing much more than just fighting for bigger pay cheques. We see immigrant workers learning English in special union classes set up at the workplace. We watch a young worker assisted in finding a job by a union-sponsored unemployment centre in Halifax. And former New Democratic Party leader Tommy Douglas makes a speech about how the labour movement has always been in the forefront pushing for medicare, pensions, and civil liberties legislation. Billed as "the human side of unions," the film argues that the labour movement is committed to helping people and communities in many ways unrecognized by the daily press and national news.

But few people will be convinced by ***!?! Unions**. The film is too confusing. It not only lacks focus; it lacks exactly what it claims the labour movement has — commitment. In a film that purports to show "the human side," we should get some feeling for someone. But too many issues and too many vignettes mean that we don't really identify with anyone.

Each episode is introduced by a blacked-out screen with the voice of some anonymous Canadian asking why, for example, the unions don't do something about drug and alcohol abuse among their members. But the blackouts are too long, and one tends to feel that the projectionist should be sobered up before the labour movement tackles the inebriated working class. Curiously, it is not the projectionist's fault, simply an idea that doesn't quite work. (Although it does make for easy and cheap over-dubbing into French.)

The vignettes which follow prove that unions do have programs specially tailored to their members' problems. But by jumping from alcohol problems to marital problems to the problems caused by multinational corporations in Canada to the need for the labour movement to support the NDP, the film satisfactorily proves none of its arguments. Tommy Douglas, for instance, gives one of the most staged speeches of his career. It sounds more like a high-schooler's essay, "Why I Would Vote for the NDP" than Douglas' familiar rallying cries for progressive social legislation. Tommy is polite and proper, nice and inoffensive, but hardly committed.

Crawley, and director Seaton Findlay cannot be faulted for the film's lack of commitment — the one quality that might have been able to integrate all the disparate images. After all, in sponsored filmmaking you do what your client wants. In putting ***!?! Unions** together, it was the CLC who was calling the shots. The Labour Congress admits that they were afraid to hire a more political filmmaker who would bring with him or her that sense of commitment. They felt the result would be too close to propaganda.

Like it or not, when you are trying to tell your side of the story it is going to be 'propaganda' of a sort. It is interesting to note that Findlay also made **Evidence of Progress**, for Exxon Corporation: a bril-

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SHORT FILM REVIEWS

liant example of propaganda! At its conclusion the audience is inclined to not only fill up at the nearest Esso station, but to give the gas pump a little hug of thanks as well. When ***!?!&*!! Unions** ends, the audience is not sure of any message. Perhaps it is as simple as, "Unionists are human beings too" — but most of us already accept that. (**Globe And Mail** editorial writers and exasperated film producers are exceptions, of course.)

Anyway, the questions remain: who is to blame for rising prices, the failures to settle contracts and find jobs for one million unemployed Canadians? The

CLC seems to ignore the nasty side of things in ***!?!&*!! Unions**. It's good to know that unions are teaching immigrants how to speak English, but perhaps the new Canadians will just join in the chorus — "Goddamn unions" — unless they, and we, are given better explanations of the battles taking place at the nation's bargaining tables. If those explanations are to be told in film, only the goddamn unions are going to put up the money. They've got that. All they need now is the commitment.

Stephen Bingham

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